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# MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY

ELMER E. HELMS



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## **TEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY**



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# Men Who Made and Marred History

*STUDIES IN BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHY*

By

ELMER ELLSWORTH HELMS, LL.D.

*Pastor, First Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles*

*Author of "Forgotten Stories," "The Gate to  
the Gospel," "Living Bread," "God  
in History," etc.*



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To  
*the four thousand members of the First  
Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles,  
California, and their families and friends,  
among whom I have ministered seven  
golden years, this volume is affectionately  
dedicated.*



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# I

## ADAM

*The Man Who Gave Us All a Start*

**B**EHIND us—Adam; behind Adam—God. The story of this first man is found in Genesis, the book of beginnings. Here are the beginnings of all things. The beginning of everything good and bad. The beginning of the world's ruin and redemption. The beginning of light and darkness. If what is found in this first book seems unsatisfactory, remember it is Genesis, not Finis; the beginning, not the end. Wait a while.

“God created man in his image, after his likeness.” Look about you. Sinning, selfish, sneaking man. Criminal, cruel, cursing man. Plotting, prodigal, penurious man. Lazy, lying, licentious man. Dirty, drunken, devilish man. Man with contorted, misshapen body. Man with dwarfed and stunted mind. Man with bleared and blackened soul. Man—Booth, Guiteau, Czolgosz. Is that God's man? No, that's the devil's man. Man was made and unmade.

God created man in His image and likeness, gave him his stamp and character. God gave to man a

perfect body, mind, soul, and put him in a perfect world. He was perfectly happy. He knew no danger, felt no pain, was free from guilt, had no fear of death. This man, Adam, had the best start of any man that ever came into this world. What a parentage. God made him. Then, by man's consent, the devil unmade him. Through redemption God would remake him, giving him once more His image and likeness. He would refashion and reform us, "until we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Will we let Him remake us into the God-man?

God made man and blessed him, literally offered him congratulations, wished him well. That's a home word. That's the birth of the home. God started man with a help-meet and a home. First creation, then location. God gave man a home, and no other such home as that has ever been. No other such carpet as Eden's velvet. No other such fruit as Eden's golden. No other such candles as Eden's stars. No other such water as Eden's springs. No other such police as Eden's angels, that stood strong guard around. A home of beauty bowered, of peace and plenty.

And God said to him, "have dominion." Man did not have to fight for supremacy, it was his by right of rank. He began supreme. He did not crawl to the feet of the beasts to see what they would name him, they crawled to his feet to see

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## THE MAN WHO GAVE US ALL A START

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what he would name them. Later, when the animals found themselves cold they helplessly shivered. But man made himself clothes, kindled himself a fire, built himself a house. He was above all other created things. On the evening of that first day he feasted his soul on the glory of the golden sunset. What animal could do that? He alone had any conception of the sublime. That first night, he lifted his heart in thanksgiving to God. What animal ever prayed? He only, of all creation, possessed the muscle by which he could turn his eye up to heaven. Animals can look down and out. Man alone can look up. He, and he alone, began existence with a moral sense and a religious feeling.

God said to him, "have dominion, be supreme." And he was. He was supreme over all—but himself. A test time came and, like the multitudes that followed him, tested, tried, failed. Of this man, who gave us all a start, there are recorded seven "Ands" pregnant with lessons.

"And he ate." We are always partaking of that which does us hurt. "And God said, the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die." That was God's threat and challenge? God said eat, and this shall be thy punishment? Nay. In grace, as in nature, there are no rewards or punishments, only consequences. In the day that thou takest a live coal in thy hand, thou shalt be burned. In the day that

thou leapest over a precipice thou shalt be crushed. In the day that thou drinkest poison thou shalt die. These are not punishments, but consequences. A sinful thought flashes through the soul. It burns and scars like lightning, not as a punishment, but as a natural consequence. Those who, Cain-like, separate themselves from God, as a necessary consequence, join themselves to Satan. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die"—not a threat, but a loving warning. God but lifted the curtain to show man the end of the course he was pursuing. To be a man, not a machine, Adam had to possess the power of choice. Life and death were his to choose, and he chose death.

"And his eyes were opened." It is a good thing to get one's eyes opened. The devil told him his eyes would be opened, and they were. But he did not see what he expected. He expected to see himself a god of wisdom. His eyes were opened and he saw he was naked. "Stripped" is the word. In the beginning man "was crowned, clothed, with glory and honour." Now he is stripped, like a young Samson, of his glory and godlikeness. His eyes were opened and lo! the divine image, character, was gone. He had hurled it away in one base act. What havoc a single moment can work. A torch can undo in a flash the work of a lifetime. To destroy is easy. Adam paid dearly for that one brief fleshly gratification.

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## THE MAN WHO GAVE US ALL A START

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A moment of pleasure and a life of pain. Sin is ever expensive. The whole of Paradise for one bite of pleasure. Achan got his wedge of gold, but it cost him his life. Gehazi got his suit of clothes, but with them the leprosy. Ananias bought his ill-gotten gain with his coffin. Sad the hour when Adam's eyes were opened.

"And he said, I was afraid." Think of it. The child afraid of the father. Man afraid of God. Afraid of the God who had made him. Afraid of Him "who so loved the world." Afraid of Him who said, "when thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up." Afraid of Him whose "mercy endureth forever." Afraid. How unnatural.

"And he hid himself from the Lord." Sin doth make cowards of us all. The man whom God made is now crouching, coward that he is, behind the trees of the garden, terrified by the shadow of every swaying bush. Instead of flinging himself into the arms of his Father, he shrank from Him. "And he hid himself." "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." Jonah takes to Tarshish, Cain to Nod, the prodigal to the swine-pen, Judas to suicide, Adam to his heels.

"And he hid himself from the presence of the Lord." Sin is the one separator. It is the thing that separated Adam from his garden and from his God. I once knew a youth with beauty in his

face, light in his eyes, glory in his brow. I saw him after sin had smitten the face. The beauty was blasted, the light dull, the glory gone. Sin had separated him from his innocence, his youth and his beauty. There's a man, sin separated from his family; and there's another, sin separated him from his property; and there's another, sin separated him from his God. Sin is the great separator. At that last, great day, sin will separate the assembled hosts into right and left, Paradise and perdition.

"And the Lord God drove the man from the garden." God put man out of Eden. But, remember, man first put God out of his life and—away went Eden. With God gone, there is no Eden. Man drove God out of Eden, not God, man. Man put himself out of Eden and the great barred gate of God swung to with a click and man is shut out. But the tree of life is not cut down. Sin only shut the gate. There is a way back to Paradise. Straight and narrow, by the way of Calvary. Man's only hope of re-entering Eden is by the way of re-creation, "a new creation." This is the mystery of the cross. A new heaven, a new earth, a new Eden, a new man.

"And all the days that Adam lived were 930 years." A millennium of opportunity. What time to plan and build. What time to get and give. What great things attempted. What great things

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## *THE MAN WHO GAVE US ALL A START*

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done. What? Name one. What did Adam leave as a monument? Daniel was a great statesman and ruler. David was a great poet-king. Moses was a great lawgiver and liberator. Joseph was a great leader and legislator. These put their stamp on empires and live immortal, because of deeds done. But Adam? His life was eight times longer than the longest of these. But he was only a name. He did the worst thing possible—nothing. Of one of earth's great ones we are told that from the time he could toddle he was not a person but a personage. Adam was never a personage. He merely had an existence.

"And all his days were 930 years long." Nine hundred and thirty years short, rather. "That life is long that answers life's great end." David Brainerd, apostle to the Indians, dying at twenty-nine; Robert McCheyne, world-wide evangelist, dying at thirty; John Summerfield, the great preacher, dying at twenty-seven; Raphael, painter immortal, dying at thirty-eight—all these lived long, for their lives answered life's great end. "We are going through life for the last time." And all we can leave behind us is the benedictions and blessings we scatter about us as we go. "The time is short."

*"Only the present hour is mine,  
I may not have another  
In which to speak a kindly word,  
Or help a needy brother."*

Soon death, the kind old nurse, will come and rock us all to sleep. We'd better help one another while we can; we are going the same way, let's go hand in hand. Make life long by deeds done.

Talk about men who have made and marred history—no man more marred history than this man Adam. He will be remembered forever not for what he did, but for what he undid. Not for the blessings he bestowed, but for the evil he brought. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” He forced from God the cry, “It repenteth me that I have made man.” He upset the very plans of heaven. Adam had the best start and made the least out of it of any man in history.

The last words written of this man are, “and he died.” That’s the world’s epitaph. I doubt not, coming to die, having passed his nine hundred and thirtieth birthday, he marvelled that life was so soon done. Whether nine, ninety or nine hundred, how quickly it is gone. How we leap from the tender teens, into the fiery forties, on to the aching eighties, then shortening breath, death, sod, God. Of the first man it was written, “and he died.” Nine times in that same short chapter, “and he died.” Of all men from first to last, it is written, “died.”

“This year thou shalt die” and—then? Prince Ligne, the great fop, as he felt death approaching,

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## *THE MAN WHO GAVE US ALL A START*

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leaped up from his bed and ordered the door closed and locked. But when he saw that that would not keep death out he rolled up his sleeves to fight it! At last, exhausted, he cried: "Back, thou accursed phantom," and fell back, dead. We can't fight that foe successfully. There is only One strong enough to deliver. He hath the keys of death and the grave. To come off conqueror we will need to link our soul with His.

The last words Longfellow wrote were:

*"Out of the shadows of night,  
The world rolls into light;  
It is daybreak everywhere."*

As you roll out of the shadows of the world's night, may it be daybreak everywhere.

## II

### MOSES

*The Man Who Gave Us Our Liberties*

ON the bosom of the Nile, in a little boat of bulrushes, rocks a little babe. In that same river, south of that little bark, pours over a great precipice, the Murchison Falls, a cataract lacking but a few feet of being as high as our Niagara. How tiny the baby. How mighty the cataract. A mere puff will put out the life of the child. What can blot out the Falls? Fifteen million cubic feet of water pour over the precipice every minute. What power. All the power of the babe is rolled in a little brain that would not fill the hollow of your hand. But, greater possibilities and power are wrapped up in that little babe than rolls over the mighty cataract. There is power enough in the Falls to light a city. Power enough in the babe to light civilization. One, the power of matter, the other, the power of mind. The power of the Falls is measured as so many volts. The power of the babe is immeasurable. For years the Murchison Falls have been growing smaller and smaller. That babe has been growing larger

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## *THE MAN WHO GAVE US OUR LIBERTIES*

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and larger. Out of that tiny cradle came our civil liberties.

We boast of being the first great Republic of the world. No, the first great Republic was not the United States of America, but the United States of Israel. We call Jefferson, Adams, Washington, the founders and fathers of the Republic. Moses was the founder of this Republic. For, if you cut out of our laws what we borrowed from Moses, you cut the heart out of the Republic.

What are some of the great fundamental principles of this Republic? Our rulers must be native born. That's Moses' "no foreigner shall rule over you." We have an elective judiciary, with three classes of courts, primary, appellate, and final. That's from Moses. Our free public school system is our pride. Moses established the first great, free public school system ever known, and in his dying will he left explicit orders, "Ye shall teach your children through all generations."

We boast of the complete separation of church and state. Under Moses, the civil and religious power was absolutely separate, so that it was impossible for a priest ever to become a magistrate or a magistrate a priest. We claim the distinction of having no standing army, but a citizen soldiery. While that is not strictly true with us, it was literally so of the first Republic, and there is where our fathers got it. We are a representative democracy;

a democracy with legislative assemblies to settle the great questions of state. Moses instituted legislative assemblies to discuss and settle the questions of peace and war, and to elect the great state officers that correspond to our United States Senators.

We point to our Homestead laws and the fact that debts become outlawed after a lapse of years, as special benedictions and blessings to the poor. The law of Moses did this, and more, for the poor of Israel. Whatever our individual practices, as a nation, from the beginning we have favoured temperance, and are proud that the great temperance movements have originated in America. The first temperance movement originated under Moses. The history of that first temperance society is found in the sixth chapter of Numbers.

Our whole civil and social fabric is held together by laws that declare, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Remember the Sabbath day." Take the decalogue out of our body politic and the Republic would come toppling down. All our laws fixing the relationship between man and man are founded on these ten laws of Moses. Cut out of our laws "Thou shalt not commit adultery," turn liberty to license, and how quickly we will become another Rome, with woman man's toy and domestic and national ruin everywhere. Take out of our laws

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## THE MAN WHO GAVE US OUR LIBERTIES

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the Sabbath day of rest, and you take from the labouring man his very life. When you have dug down to the rock, you will find this Republic has two great cornerstones, the home (and the home is founded on fidelity) and the Sabbath. Washington said, "The Republic will live as long as she remembers the home and the Sabbath." And the home and the Sabbath, Moses gave us.

Queen Victoria once being asked to what ruler or statesman England owed most, promptly answered, "To a statesman commonly called Moses." And America owes even more to him than does England. Moses gave us our *Magna Charta* of liberty—"All men are created free and equal." Why has not some orator arisen, on some Fourth of July, to speak on "Moses, the Father of American Liberty"? The constitutions written by Jefferson, Locke, Plato, have all had to be amended. Our constitution has, already, nineteen amendments. But the constitution written by Moses never needed amending.

If there was one paramount cause of the fall of the Roman Empire, it was the great wealth of the few and the great poverty of the many. It's an open question if that is not fast becoming our great weakness and danger. In the Republic founded by Moses, it was impossible for great fortunes to be amassed in single individuals or families. On the start every man was given a farm, and if by mis-

fortune or mischance he lost it, after a cycle of seven times seven years, it came back to his family. In England more than forty-five millions of people own not a foot of land, while fewer than three millions own it all. Both England and America may yet see the day when their only national salvation is by this law of Moses.

What emphasis Moses laid upon the duties, rather than the privileges, of rulers. How clearly he pointed out that the welfare of the state depends upon the righteousness of her citizens: "Righteousness exalteth a nation." How plain his edicts against political corruption, bribery, revenge, hatred, falsehood, unchastity, theft. How strictly he enjoined respect and reverence for parents, care of the poor, integrity, brotherly kindness. How that first Republic breathed a spirit of freedom, purity, intelligence, justice, humanity, unknown among the nations of that time and unequalled since.

If any doubt remains of the great statesmanship of this man, let it but be remembered that, while the nations founded by Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Charlemagne, are gone, he took a race of ignorant, superstitious, degraded slaves, and in forty years moulded them into a race that lives today, centuries after Rome and Greece and Egypt and Macedon are dead. This race has furnished modern nations with kings, artists,

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## *THE MAN WHO GAVE US OUR LIBERTIES*

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scholars, poets, philosophers, musicians, historians, statesmen, financiers. What is finance without Rothschild, statesmanship without Disraeli, music without Mendelssohn, philosophy without Lessing? All of the race that Moses founded.

Moses showed his foresighted statesmanship by starting and establishing Israel, not as a manufacturing or commercial people, but as an agricultural people. Every great nation that has lived has begun with its hands and the soil. The farmer is the foundation of all. The most conspicuous figure in statescraft, ancient or modern, is this man Moses. While, if you view him from ten other sides, you can write "great" before each.

Who was the first great liberator? Not Lloyd Garrison of 1831, nor John Brown of 1859, nor Abraham Lincoln of 1863, but Moses. Without army or cannon or sword, he liberated three million slaves from under the most despotic, cruel and bloody of governments. As a leader, the world has never seen his equal. Follow him in that marvellous journey from Nile to Nebo, through the wilderness forty years, leading that mob of illiterate, rebellious, ungrateful, forgetful people. His task stands unequaled and his success unexcelled. In everything that makes a leader great, he was great. When Israel became discouraged, he encouraged them. When they longed for the fleshpots of Egypt, he wooed them on by the odour of Canaan.

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## *MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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And through it all he was as tender as a father and as gentle as a mother.

As a teacher, he undertook to turn that mob to men, to train that three million people, more ignorant than children, for citizenship and self-government, and he succeeded. As a historian; we say Herodotus was the father of history. Moses was an ancient historian before Herodotus was born. Moses was the father of history. He was the world's first great historian. He pressed into three short chapters the history of ages, an accomplishment unparalleled.

He was also a master of literature. He gave to literature its two sublimest sentences—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Other writers have taken volumes to retell the same thing. He condensed into one page all cosmology. Not Hippocrates, but Moses, was the father of medicine. He, not Harvey, discovered the circulation of the blood. And, if the medical fraternity had studied Moses, they would have ceased bleeding their patients long before they did, for he declares, "The blood is the life." The germ theory of disease, so recently discovered, Moses knew all about, and tells all about.

As a poet, what songs he sung. Read the Ninetieth Psalm. He had the true poetic instinct, for he sang songs of the soul. What multitudes

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## THE MAN WHO GAVE US OUR LIBERTIES

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have found consolation and help in his, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Homer, Virgil, Dante, held no such pen as his. He was the one myriad-minded man.

We live in an age when we ask of a horse, "What time can he make?" Of a machine, "What work can it do?" Of a business, "What will it pay?" Standing in the presence of this practical age when everything is measured by its power to produce, by such a standard, aye, by any standard, this man Moses towers head and shoulders above any other man whose name history bears.

*"This was the bravest warrior  
That ever buckled sword;  
This the most gifted poet  
That ever breathed a word:  
And never earth's philosopher  
Traced with his golden pen,  
On the deathless page, truths half so sage  
As he wrote down for men."*

### III

## JOSEPH

### *The Incorrumpible Man*

D AVID was assailed at the point of his fleshly passions, and fell. Joseph was more fiercely assailed, and stood. Saul was tempted to misuse unbridled power, and yielded. Joseph's temptation and opportunity for political corruption was far greater, but he resisted. Jacob, under the lash of a great personal wrong, returned "eye for eye." Joseph, under the scourge of the greatest personal wrong, returned good for evil. Abraham, hard pressed, lied. Joseph, far harder pressed, swerved not from the truth. Moses, under provocation, lost his temper. Joseph, under much greater provocation, was majestically calm. Solomon, the chosen ruler of God's people, went after false gods. Joseph, ruler of a heathen people, married to a heathen wife, stood true to Jehovah. Job, possesed of great wealth, became intoxicated of his prosperity. Joseph, with the world's greatest empire in his possession, "walked softly all his days." Peter, his personal courage put to the test, utterly failed.

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## THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN

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Joseph's courage, more severely tested, he proved the bravest of the brave.

This man assailed, attacked, set upon, tempted, tried, tested on every possible side, stood "like some tall cliff against the storm." In his private life, in his public deeds, in his political dealings, though "tempted in all points," he stands before men without spot or blemish or taint. Among the sons of men, there is no character more faultless and none so fascinating.

An English scholar, the master of twenty-eight languages, says, "I have carefully searched the world of letters, ancient and modern, and nowhere have I found a story that equals the story of Joseph in pathos, beauty and charm." The simple tale as given in Genesis is a literary masterpiece. To attempt to compress the story of such a life into a single chapter would be like attempting to grasp the universe in one's hand. It must be taken for granted that this familiar tale is familiar to you: the coat of many colours, the dreams, the brothers' envy, the pit, the bondage, the great temptation, the prison, the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, the exaltation, the reconciliation, the meeting with his father—the great life, the great death. In this brief space I can only emphasize a few of the guiding principles that governed his life.

The great word in Joseph's vocabulary was

“God.” God’s hand was on the helm of his life. He always, first, found out God’s will, and that settled his way. “Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he will bring it to pass,” was the first article in his creed. When the great temptation faced him, how like a flash it must have come to him, “If I yield, this woman will free me from my bondage. This is the short, straight road up, out of slavery and exile, and at the end I see home.” But, looking along the way of temptation, he saw not God. And quickly he reasoned, “A way that is so crooked as to hide God can’t be the straight way up, but the straight way down.” He saw, as in a mirror, “If I fall I will never rise: if I rise I will never fall.” And, looking up, there was the eye in heaven, and his soul cried out, “Thou, God, seest me.” And he fled with the cry, “How can I do this great sin against God.” Not atheism, not agnosticism, but God, was his strong tower. “The Lord is the strength of my life,” was his shield of defense.

No man ever had a harder lot or faced greater difficulties for thirteen years than did Joseph. But he always looked at his difficulties through God. Not at God, through his difficulties. So that, through all the long thirteen years, he was able to say, “Whatever is, is best;” “my disappointments are His appointments.” He possessed the art of letting go, and falling back on God. He ever put

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## THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN

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God first. Tempted, it was "God" he flung between him and the temptation. In prison, we read, "The Lord was with him." Standing before Pharaoh, his answer to the dream is, "God." "Them that honour me, will I honour." Joseph was true to God, and God was true to Joseph. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord," and his stops, too. Godliness proved profitable to Joseph. Godliness is profitable. The secret of his success was—God.

Joseph saw always, as though written in fire across the sky, "Don't forget, your life is before you." A man learning to ride a bicycle, his little boy ran by his side, shouting, "Don't look at the handle-bars, father, look ahead." Joseph, in prison, looked above his prison. In bondage, he looked beyond his bondage. He always had his chin tilted up.

*"Life is a leaf of paper white,  
Whereon each one of us may write  
A word or two, and then comes night.  
Greatly begin! though thou have time  
But for a line, be that sublime,—  
Not failure, but low aim, is crime."*

Remembering this, Joseph lifted his eyes above policy and fixed them on principle. With him, it was principle ever, policy never. He started out in life not to beat somebody, but to be somebody. A thousand-mile journey is made up of steps. He

looked to his steps. A thousand-mile journey begins with one step. He saw that that first step pointed the right way. He remembered it is not enough to keep going, but to keep going in the right direction.

A student carelessly located three points on the board and began to construct on them a geometrical figure. "That won't do," said the professor, "your points are wrong." "I guess it will come out all right," answered the student. "Try it and you will see," said the professor. The wrong points ended in the wrong figure. "Let me tell you, young man," said the professor, "the first points count. They may not be a half inch out of true, but look at the end." The first points count. Purity, honesty, principle, as starting-points produce a very different figure than unchastity, trickery and policy. The first points count. "Boys will be boys." Yes, but they will also, in time, be men. "Don't forget, life is before you." "Not failure, but low aim is crime." Would you be a Joseph? Turn your gaze upward.

The Psalmist writes of Joseph, "They laid him in iron." The literal is, "Iron entered into his soul." True, he was laid in iron, but as truly iron entered into his soul. The might of the storm that beats against the eagle's breast, enters the eagle's wings. The hurricane that lays hold of the oak, enters into the strength of the oak. The very

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## THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN

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chains that bound Joseph, entered into his moral muscle. Things that seem against us, are often for us. "A rough start makes a rugged son." Early disadvantages are often advantages. Roosevelt, born with a frail body, weak eyes, a thick tongue —laid in iron, the iron entered into his soul. He waxed strong in overcoming great obstacles.

There is a Greek proverb, "We ascend downward." Joseph climbed by the way of the pit, the prison and persecution, to the premiership and power. The stone at the bottom of that pit was the first step up. The hot march with the slave gang prepared him to ride in the king's chariot. "Discipline is the purchase money of nobility." Hot-house plants can't stand chill. The flabby muscle fails in the fight. Iron is the strength of greatness. Life without struggle is a thing much sought after. Unless the violin strings are stretched until they cry out, there is no music. Unless the glacier grinds the rock to powder, there is no fertile field. Unless the marble feels the cold chisel, there comes forth no immortal image. The steps by which we climb are not gold, but iron. A doctor said to an anæmic-looking man, "You need iron in your blood." "Iron dukes, iron battalions, iron saints," men of iron is the need of the world. The crown of iron precedes the crown of gold. "Iron entered into his soul."

Joseph had also learned by heart, "Character is

the currency that passes at a premium the world around.” Now and then gold is at a premium, but character is always at a premium. When that wicked woman laid hold upon him, he lost his coat, but not his character. He wrote upon the dark walls of his dungeon, “Keep me pure, make others great.” He thought more of his character than of his condition. For, he could have exchanged his character for an easy condition. But he preferred the prison with a clean manhood, to the palace with a tainted soul. It is always safe to shun wrong. It is always safe to do right.

Suppose Joseph had yielded to the wiles of that bewitching woman. Then there would have been no one to have stayed the famine. It would have stalked like a skeleton through the land. Egypt would have perished. Palestine, God’s chosen people, would have died. Greece and Rome would only have been spots on the map. Civilization would have been blotted out. It is always safe to shun wrong. That day that Joseph triumphed over self, he triumphed over all. Says Carlyle, “He who controls himself, controls everybody.” How few Josephs there have been. Anthony led the Roman eagle to victory and then fell before Cleopatra. Viewed from the far-off ages, it can be said, blessed the man who clings to his character, though stripped of his coat.

Then, how there rings out of Joseph’s life, “He

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## THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN

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was faithful." In the slave field, in Potiphar's house, in the prison yard, in the governorship—faithful. Faithful to his task, faithful to his trust, faithful to his God. In this shoddy age, age of shoddy shoes, shoddy morals, there is no word that more needs emphasizing than this word "faithful." Joshua confronted Israel with the charge, "Why are ye so slack?" The old prophet thundered, "Cursed be he who doeth his work negligently." A poor boy faithfully cobbled shoes in a little shop at Nantiac, Massachusetts, and died Vice-President of the United States.

A man is today president of a great railway because he proved to be the best mule-currier the Kansas City Street Car Company ever had. "He that is faithful in a little I will make ruler over much." What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. "Don't be a botch." There is an establishment in this country that has for its motto, "Not how cheap, but how good." He fails, who fails to do his best. That man lives twice, who lives the first life well.

Where in our version we read, "Joseph was a prosperous man," the old versions read, "He was a lucky fellow." As the other slaves saw him rise they said, "What a lucky fellow." He toiled while the other slaves slept. He looked after Potiphar's affairs while the other slaves looked after themselves. He busied himself bettering the prison,

while the other prisoners busied themselves trying to break out. "What a lucky fellow." "Seest thou a man faithful in business, he shall stand before kings." There are plus and minus people. Joseph was plus.

Then notice, while poverty and prison did not crush him, prosperity and power did not ruin him. Many can stand poverty who can't stand prosperity. Many can bear the weight of the prison who can't stand the weight of power. There are flowers that blossom under the cold snow, which wither under the warm sun. Snatched from the bosom of his home, a tender youth with soft hands, in a few days Joseph is sold, a slave in the Egyptian market. With fetters on his feet, he hobbles into the field to his task, under the tropical sun. At night his bed was a wisp of straw. For ten years he thus toiled, never seeing a face he knew. He exchanged his lot but once, and that from slave pen to prison pen. But through it all he let not the darkness creep into his soul, neither did he let his burdens bear him down. Suddenly, one day he exchanged prison rags for palace robe, iron fetters for chain of gold, bed of straw for a couch of down, and in one brief hour he leaped from the prison to the prime ministry of Egypt.

To appreciate the heights to which he was suddenly exalted, it must be remembered that this was 600 years before Greece had learned her letters;

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## THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN

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1,200 years before Rome was founded; 1,500 years before Buddha taught. Egypt was the centre of the world's civilization, art, law and invention. An exile, a slave, a prisoner one hour, greater than the monarch of any other land the next hour. And yet all this never inflated him nor turned his head. Herein is seen his real greatness. Little boats are easily upset. He proved ever superior to his environment, and left to the world the lesson, "A man can be a man for a' that."

Another look at this great character reveals that next to "God," the greatest word in his life was Generosity. Where is there a story of blacker inhumanity, more fiendish cruelty than the treatment of Joseph by his brothers? Where can you find a man imprisoned on falser and fouler charges than those that thrust Joseph into prison for three years? Where can you equal that butler's inexcusable and selfish forgetfulness? Yet, when the hour suddenly comes that the brothers, Mrs. Potiphar, the butler, are all in Joseph's power, what does he do? It need not be answered. He never measured his treatment of others by their treatment of him. He is a large man who has a large heart. In all his dealings with those that had wronged him, Joseph put self down. He wept over his brothers, pitied the butler, bore no ill will toward the woman. He always believed the best of everybody. Generous, gentle. Those words are from the same root.

No man can really be the one without the other. He only is great who is gentle. Joseph's gentleness made him great. "The bravest are the tenderest." A fitting epitaph for him would be, "He was nothing if not kind."

No one can look at this man without saying, he was mighty because manly. There was no skeleton in the closet of his soul. He feared no Banquo's ghost. He was no Belshazzar trembling before some handwriting on the wall. He was no Macbeth crying, "Out, damned spot." He had nothing to hide, therefore nothing to fear. There were no thorns in his pillow. He did not toss at night in fear of the coming day. He stood in awe of no explosion. Suddenly summoned before Pharaoh, he stood calm and cool. He dreaded no investigation. He was always on the right side of the ledger. Many around him preferred to dress good, rather than to be good. While others were ignoble, he strove to be noble. While others were mean, he was manly, and his manhood made him mighty.

Mr. Girard once discharged a young man from his employ because he refused to work on the Sabbath. With choking voice, the young man said, "Mr. Girard, I have a widowed mother to support, but I can't sin against God to support her." Some weeks after, the president of a bank, where two cashiers in succession had proved false to their trust, appealed to Mr. Girard to name a man that

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### *THE INCORRUPTIBLE MAN*

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could be trusted. Mr. Girard named the young man that he had recently discharged, and said, "A man who won't sell his conscience for a position can be trusted." The message of Joseph's life to this sordid, commercial age is, Manhood is might.

Emerson advised young men against taking a mud bath. Joseph never took a mud bath. He believed with the Sage of Concord, "Ideals rather than Ideas make the world." Joseph lived up as well as looked up.

Viewing this great character through the telescope of 4,000 years, we can but say, "All things high came easy to him." And so viewing him, our hearts are turned to high things. "Set your affections on things above."

## IV

### SAMSON

#### *A Giant Shorn*

**A**BRAHAM was the man of faith. Samuel was the man of prayer. Solomon was the man of wisdom. Samson was the man of muscle. The giant, Augustus II., could roll up a silver plate like a sheet of paper. Milo, the giant of Crete, could uproot trees and break them in two. The deeds of Samson remind one of the labours of Hercules. Like the Duke of Brunswick's guard, who was eight and a half feet tall, like Charles Brine, whose stature was eight feet, four inches, Samson was a very mountain of flesh. He lived in a time when "to discover the greatness of a man, the measuring-string was put around the muscle. There came a time later, when the measuring-string was put around the head. There will come a time when the measuring-string will be put around the heart."

Samson was a very elephant of a man. He reigned, but it was the reign of the fist. His was a time "of the survival of the fittest, not of the fittest." Samson was full of force, but also full of

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### *A GIANT SHORN*

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faults. He had a mighty brawn, but not so mighty a brain. A giant of muscle, but not of morals. An elephantine body, an infantine mind. He was a gigantic child. He gave himself over to huge tops, and toys, and playthings. How he enjoyed carrying off the gates of Gaza. How he amused himself tying foxes' tails together. How he chuckled over his riddles. A great muscle, a little mind. A giant, but a dwarf. A physical monstrosity, a moral pigmy. "In all this world there is nothing so small as a big thing that's little." That was Samson.

An earlier King Arthur, he was enticed to his ruin by a woman. Samson had too much to do with the wrong kind of women. Once burned, he knew not enough to keep away from the fire. He slew a lion, and then the lion of lust slew him. What wrecks the Delilahs and Herodias' and Mrs. Potiphars and Lady Pompadours have left in their track. They mildew and blast all they touch. The paths they trod are left scorched and blighted. What a benediction and blessing to mankind, the Ruths and Abigails and Rebeccas. Woman has always had her finger on the latch of heaven or hell. There is a way that seemeth pleasant unto man, the Delilah way, but the end is death.

What was the secret and source of this giant's strength? His hair, of course. Of course not. Before all his deeds of daring, you read, "The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him." Like

John the Baptist and James the brother of our Lord, he was a Nazarite. His hair was but the token, the symbol of his vow to Jehovah, the badge, the seal of his consecration, the testimony that he was true to God. His hair was nothing. It was God that was everything. His hair but proclaimed, "As long as I am faithful to God, He will be faithful to me." His strength was not located in his hair, but in heaven. Samson made too much of his hair. He said, "I can do all things through my hair," instead of through the Lord. Like Absalom, his hair, which was his glory and pride, became also his shame and destruction. His hair was the key to his strength, or rather, to his weakness.

Before the Philistines can destroy him they must learn the secret of his giant power, and so, slipping a bribe into the hand of his treacherous wife, Delilah, they wait. A woman always finds a way or makes one. What fear won't do, a tear will. Delilah weeps upon his neck. Samson has reached the danger point; he plays with his sacred secret. "Bind me with green withes and my strength will be gone." She bound him, and he laughed as he snapped them. "Now try ropes, new ropes, that will do it." The ropes part like strings, and he enjoys the joke. "Fasten my hair with a pin to the beam." His hair; he has reached his hair. Samson, beware, there is danger there.

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### *A GIANT SHORN*

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What a fool he, who plays with fire, just to see if it will burn. What a fool he, who drinks poison, just to see if it will kill. Samson has begun to feel the edge of that dangerous weapon, Delilah, just to see if it is sharp. He says, "There is no hurt in my telling her about the withes and ropes and hair-pins. I'll stop before I reach the danger line." But he got to going and couldn't stop. The way was down grade and the brake was off. And so, to his own great surprise, he is out with it, "Cut my locks and my strength will be gone."

That night she caresses him. She fondles him. She toys with his hair. She gently trots his shaggy head on her lap. And ever and anon she passes her perfumed handkerchief over his face. It was drugged. He now breathes deep. In his dreams, a smile passes over his countenance. Stealthily now, like a Lady Macbeth, Delilah slips the shears from their place of concealment and clips. She clips to the scalp. Samson paid dearly for that one caress. Adam paid Paradise for a bit of pleasure. Achan paid life for a bit of gold. Samson let Delilah play with his locks to his eternal hurt.

Clipped, Delilah awoke him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon thee." Samson arose and said, "I will go out and shake myself as at other times." He went out and shook himself, and—there is no sadder sentence in all literature than this, "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

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## *MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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He went out and shook himself like a lion and roared like a beast of the forest, but the voice had lost its terror, and the earth no longer trembled under his tread. His muscle measured the same as before, but it had lost its might. He looked the same, but he wasn't the same. He was shorn. The oak had not changed in outward appearance, but it was worm-eaten. The sad thing is, Samson was not conscious of his lost power. He did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

So long and so gradually had he been losing his power that he was unconscious that he had lost it. The darkness stole so slowly over him that he was not aware that the day had died out of his life. It was not a sudden plunge down, but a gentle descent, so gradual that he did not know when he exchanged mountain height for valley depth. Once he was a monarch eagle, now but a carrion hawk; but when he passed from eagle to hawk, "he wist not." He did not crash the telescope glass with one fell stroke, he but breathed upon it; the stars grew dimmer and dimmer, until at last they were lost to sight. It was the dripping of the black into the snowy white, drop by drop, working a change so subtle and so slow, that he was not conscious that his soul had lost its snow purity. For long his power had been slipping away, when lo! of a sudden, it is gone.

Sir Edward Parry, the Arctic explorer, thought

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### *A GIANT SHORN*

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he was travelling toward the pole at the rate of ten miles a day, when he discovered that the ice-floe on which he was travelling was drifting southward twelve miles a day. So that he was really going south two miles a day. But Sir Edward would not have known this if he had not looked up to the stars. Having lost the upward gaze, Samson was all unconscious of the backward drifting. "He wist not." He went out and shook himself as before. Weak, indeed, but he imagined that he was still strong. Powerless, but he supposed that he was powerful. Only a skeleton now, and yet he says, "Feel my muscle." He was a temple from which the people had fled, a body from which the spirit had departed, a giant from which the strength had gone, and "he wist it not." "Ichabod" was written across the face of his soul. Everything was strangely, sadly changed. His ears were dulled, his eyes deadened, his feet weighted. The sky was one black blotch, life's blossoms hung withered, the springs were dried, the world was one vast sepulchre in which lay his dead self. All this others knew, but "he wist it not."

While God was with him, Samson could carry off the gates of Gaza, slay a thousand Philistines. But, when God departed from him, how easily his eyes were gouged out. When he broke with God he broke the back of his power. He was strong so long as he was strong in the Lord. But when the

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## *MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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Lord departed from him he stood shorn of his strength. A mere dwarf now. The Chinese know well the art of dwarfing feet; the Japanese, the art of dwarfing the plants; the Central Africans, the are of dwarfing the body. The life of Samson reveals the subtle art of dwarfing the soul.

Behold the giant shorn. Delilah's shears did it. Dangerous playthings. Yesterday there was a man of giant physical strength. Today see him, hollow-eyed, sunken-cheeked, flabby-muscled. Delilah's shears did it. There was a man of giant social power. Today his step is unsteady, his eye bleared, his face flushed, his tongue thick. Delilah's shears did it. There was a man, a Samson of finance. Today he stretches out a greasy hand, begging for a single dollar, that he may "try his luck" again. Delilah's shears did it. Here was a man of great power because of great purity. Now his eyes roll wild and lustful, his feet stagger into yon place, that takes hold on hell. Delilah's shears did it.

From the land of the blue grass came a great political leader, strong in speech, mighty in argument, a coming Samson in statesmanship. But Delilah set upon him to clip him. And the night he was led from the auditorium rostrum in Chicago, with knees knocking together, speech maudlin, trembling with tremens, he was clipped. See this mighty Samson, Napoleon, making the nations

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### *A GIANT SHORN*

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tremble, as he marches into Italy, Egypt, Russia. He counted his slain, not by the thousands, but by the millions. He played with crowns. He gathered thrones for relics. See him now, stripped, shorn, eyes out, grinding in St. Helena, dying, his sole possession his military boots. The Delilah shears of unbridled and unholy ambition did it. The shears of greed shore Ananias. The shears of idolatry shore Solomon. The shears of disobedience shore Saul.

Delilah's shears, without number, dissipation, immorality, evil association, selfishness, pride, luxury, self-indulgence, evil. What "heaps on heaps" these Delilah shears have shorn. While Samson was conquering the Philistines, he was safe. But when peace was restored, and he lay in the lap of luxury and ease and self-indulgence, then came Delilah's shears. Ease, not effort, slew him. His advantages, not his disadvantages, downed him. Making pleasure the pursuit of life, he fell into Delilah's lap. His flesh was so willing and his spirit was so weak. Self-indulgence was his ruin. So, too, might be written of Byron, Burns, De-Quincy and hosts of the world's slain Samsons. Delilah's silken lap of ease and fleshly pleasure is a dangerous resting-place. Delilah's shears, how sharp.

With a shout the Philistines are upon him. With hellish hot irons they bore out his eyes. With a

groan the giant sinks down, ungianted. Like a dog in his kennel, Samson is chained to the prison mill, grinding corn. The most menial service. How the mighty are fallen. Betrayed, degraded, imprisoned, forsaken, grinding. A king grinding corn. What a multitude of modern Samsons grinding in prison cells.

Three thousand Philistines assembled in the temple of Dagon, and they said, "Fetch Samson out and let him make sport for us." A king, a plaything. That game ended in the death of the 3,000 and Samson. A game of death. Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now play before us." That was a game of death. Bacchus says, "Come, young men, play." A game of death. Voluptas touches her bewitching lips to those of young manhood and says, "Come, let's play." Death.

"Howbeit, while he was in prison, his hair began to grow again." That's easy. But to restore the character, to renew the soul, to remake the man, that's a different problem. It was his soul that was shorn. When the gay company tire of making sport with Samson, they hie themselves to the garden roof. Pathetic the picture, as the blind giant begs the little lad that led him by the chain to let him feel the two pillars that held up the roof. You don't hear him now boasting about his hair, but with such a cry to God as never before broke from the giant's soul, he pleads, "Oh, Lord God,

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## *A GIANT SHORN*

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remember me and strengthen me this once more.” As his heart went up to God in deep penitence and prayer, his muscle became once more like iron, and then with a mighty push—snap went the pillars, down crashed the roof, and the shrieks of the broken, dying 3,000 gay society Philistines, was awful to hear.

“I have just given God the fag-end of my life,” said a dying young man in a western city. Samson died with prayer on his lips and repentance in his heart, but it was the fag-end of life he gave to God. He recovered something of his power, but not its youthful buoyancy. He brought his soul again to God, but it was sore scarred.

“*I walked through the woodland meadows  
Where sweet the thrushes sing,  
And saw on a bed of mosses  
A bird with a broken wing.*

“*I healed its wound, and each morning  
It sang its old, sweet strain,  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soared so high again.*

“*I saw a young life stricken  
By sin’s seductive art,  
And touched with a Christlike pity  
I took him to my heart;  
He lived with a noble purpose  
And struggled not in vain,  
But the life that sin had stricken  
Never soared so high again.*

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## *MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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*"Each loss has its compensation,  
There's healing for every pain;  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soars so high again."*

But Milton, in his *Samson*, sees the blind giant on that last day as he is brought into the temple, turn his blind heart up to God in deep repentance and anguish of soul. And God heard and answered, and flooded his blind face with light and filled him once more with power. 'Tis not a poet's dream. 'Tis more than a poet's vision. 'Tis true. 'Tis God's rainbow of hope and promise of mercy toward all the much sinning.

*"Christ the mighty healer  
Has a balm for every pain;  
And the life that sin has stricken  
Higher still shall rise again."*

'Tis the voice of the Man of Galilee, saying, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to heal the broken-hearted, to give deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind." Sinning Samsons, there is a Saviour.

# V

## JACOB

### *A Crooked Man Made Straight*

JACOB started out to succeed by hook or crook, and it was mostly by crook. He long since was dead, but all his crookedness is recorded in the Book. That's the way God writes biography. He conceals nothing. Noah gets drunk, David commits adultery, Moses lets fly his temper, Peter swears—and it's all written. The biography of the Bible is one of the strongest incidental proofs of its divinity.

Jacob was the second born of twins. No two born on opposite sides of the globe could have been more different than Jacob and Esau. In bodily appearance, tastes, temperament, disposition, character, they were strangely unlike. If twins born are in every particular unlike, what becomes of the law of heredity? Esau was a born sportsman. He loved the chase. He cared more for a good broth than a good birthright. But "Jacob was a plain man." He was a home body. He cared not for the tinsel of life. He was simple in tastes and old-fashioned.

Before these two sons were born, God said the

second born should be first. God put the second birth first. God always begins with the second birth. Life begins with the second birth. "Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again." "Better never to have been born, than to have been born but once."

The last was first. It was stamped on Jacob that he should rule, as it is stamped upon the bird that it should fly. It was stamped upon Esau that he should serve, as it is stamped upon the worm that it should crawl. God said, "The elder shall serve the younger." But Rebecca can't see how it can be done, for it's contrary to all custom and law. And so, the day that Isaac sends Esau to prepare him venison, that he may eat it and bless him before he dies, Rebecca feels that God is in a tight place, and she goes to desperate lengths to help Him out.

True, Esau had no right to the blessing, having bartered it away. But Jacob, keen, sharp, shrewd, tricky, what a bargain he drove to get it. Esau, coming from a long hunt frantic for food, smells the savoury dish that Jacob was preparing. Jacob sees the deep hunger in his eye and says, "What will you give me?" "What will you take?" "Your birthright." "Oh, well, I will die if I don't get something to eat quick, take the birthright and give me the pottage." "What will you give, what will you take?" Bargains.

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## *A CROOKED MAN MADE STRAIGHT*

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Jacob was the father of the modern bargain-counter. The world is always after bargains. The bargain-day and the bargain-counter are the crowded day and the crowded counter. This is the bargain age. The world is turned into Jacobs and Esaus, sellers and buyers.

When Esau goes to the forest to bring down some choice game for his father, Rebecca hastens to prepare a kid and sends Jacob into his father's presence to receive the blessing. "But," says Jacob, "Esau is hairy. My father peradventure will feel me and I shall seem a deceiver and he will curse me instead." The only thing that worried him was the fear of getting caught. It is all right to lie if you are not caught. David Hume said, "Adultery is nothing if not known." Crime is not criminal. It's the getting caught that is criminal. "I am afraid I may get caught," says Jacob. Jacob was a very modern man.

To guard against getting caught, Rebecca puts Esau's clothes upon him and covers his face and hands with the hairy skin of the kid. They were not going to tell a lie, they were only going to act a lie. The most damnable lie is the lie that is only acted. It's the lie of a hypocrite. Jacob goes to his acting. His blind old father no sooner smells the steaming meat than he says, "Who art thou?" Jacob had not counted on questions. But there is no help for it, it must be answered.

“I am Esau, thy firstborn.” How Jacob trembles. He did not expect to get in so deep. The robber does not plan to kill. Jacob doesn’t recover from the first question until there’s the second. “How is it thou hast found it so quickly?” There is no backing out now. “Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.” The devil brought it, but no matter. There is something so suspicious about the voice that the old man once more says, “Art thou my very son Esau?” Will he never be done with these questions? Out it comes, “I am.” Jacob acted one lie and had to tell three to get out of that one, and then he only got into it. “One sin demands another.”

*“What a tangled web we weave  
When first we practice to deceive.”*

Jacob receives the blessing, hastens out, wipes the sweat from his brow, and says, “I am glad that’s ended at last.” Ended? It was only begun. An infidel in Illinois wrote to a paper, “I plowed my field on Sunday, planted the corn on Sunday, cultivated it, cut it, husked it, and hauled it on Sunday, and I find that I have more corn per acre than any that has been cribbed in this neighbourhood this October.” The editor printed the letter and then put under it in capitals, “GOD DOESN’T ALWAYS SETTLE HIS ACCOUNTS IN OCTOBER.” Because judgment against an

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## *A CROOKED MAN MADE STRAIGHT*

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evil work is not executed speedily, men think God has forgotten. Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they cease not to grind.

For fifty years it looked as though Jacob's sin was forgotten, but it wasn't. God doesn't always settle His accounts in October. Jacob slew a kid to deceive his father, and his sons slew a kid to deceive him. Jacob lied to his father, and his sons lied to him. The evil that men do lives after it is done. Whatsoever ye do to men, they will do also unto you. "With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again." Rob, and you'll be robbed. Hate, and you'll be hated. "Judge, and ye shall be judged." Says Adonibezek, "As I have done, so is it done to me." Haman swings from his own gallows. You can't separate sowing and reaping. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Jacob didn't sow sparingly, and it is sure he didn't reap sparingly. He sowed the wind, he reaped the whirlwind.

Said Isaac to Esau, "Thy brother came with subtilty and hath taken thy blessing." From that hour Esau sleeps with one eye open watching his chance for revenge. Under the scourge of fear, Jacob flees. We read, "And Jacob went out." Those are the words that were written of Cain. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." What a lash is sin. Its scorpion sting drove Adam from Eden, the prodigal to the swine-

pen, Judas to suicide, Nebuchadnezzar to the beasts.

Fleeing, Jacob thought he was rid of conscience and of God, but that very first night, the cry was forced from him, "Surely God is in this place." When the evening shadows fall, a home-sickness creeps over Jacob, and he longs for the tender resting-place of childhood. But he has only the sky for shelter, hooting owls for company, and the stones of Bethel for a pillow. It is easy to sin, it is not so easy to lie on sin's stony pillow. Sin makes a hard bed.

"The way of the transgressor is hard." But God appeared to him that night and said, "I am the God of Jacob." The God of this sinning, scheming, slippery Jacob. What a name for God—"the God of Jacob." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save the people." Jesus was named for sinners. The God of Jacob, the God of sinners.

"And there appeared to Jacob a ladder that reached to heaven." Said a young man to his college professor, "When I finish school, I have brilliant prospects before me. I shall become rich and famous." "And then?" "I shall marry a wife and travel much." "And then?" "I shall settle down and enjoy life." "And then?" "I shall grow old and take things easy." "And then?" "I suppose, like other people, I must then die."

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## *A CROOKED MAN MADE STRAIGHT*

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“And then?” The young man grew pale before the last “and then.” His ladder did not reach to heaven. Does your ladder reach to heaven?

Looking up that ladder, Jacob saw God at the other end. And he said, “If God will—I will.” I will be right with God. But he went from that ladder and that vision to his old tricks again. Jacob was so human. He was bone of our bone. We can’t understand Abraham, he is above us; but we can understand Jacob. Jacob is the Peter of the Old Testament. “I will not forsake thee,” says Peter. And then in one brief hour he denies Him thrice and flees. This man Jacob was a mingled yarn, good and ill together. But when he entered Laban’s service, Greek had met Greek. Laban changed his wages ten times, cheated him out of seven years’ salary, defrauded him by many a trick. However, before they are through, Jacob sees to it that Laban pays for all his tricks at compound interest.

In all those years of cheating and counter cheating, there is but one bright spot. “And Jacob loved Rachel and served for her seven years, and they seemed but a few days for the love he had for her.” And when Laban, by contemptible trick, cheated him out of her whom he loved, Jacob gladly served seven more years for her. Love will do anything. Love’s labour is always light. A young Mohammedan ruler told his wife he

would build for her the most magnificent temple ever built. The wife suddenly dying, the young king cried in his grief, " You shall yet have your temple, though now it be your tomb." And so, for twenty years, twenty-two thousand men laboured and twenty million dollars were spent, and then stood the indescribable Taj Mahal of India, and over its great door the inscription, " To the memory of an undying love." Love will do anything. Jacob endured frost by night and famine by day, deception and wrong, for love's sake.

But at last, having fully repaid Laban for all his cheating, and some more, Jacob slips away at night, back to his native land. Laban pursues after and, coming upon him, a bitter quarrel ensues, which ends in the beautiful " Mizpah." May all our differences so sweetly end. Jacob, hurrying on, of a sudden comes the unwelcome news that Esau is coming to meet him with four hundred soldiers. The ghost of twenty-five years ago rises before him. Jacob remembers Esau's vow to slay him.

That night, across the stream Jabbok, separated from his family, stripped of all human help, in a place weird and wild, his only company the baying coyote, " Jacob was left alone." Esau was in front of him, Laban was behind him, the bandit robbers were all around him. The only way open was, up. When all other ways are closed, that way is always

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## *A CROOKED MAN MADE STRAIGHT*

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open. Jacob was at last cornered. He is in a tight place. Like Peter when he was sinking, like Job when he was stripped, like Samson when he was in prison, Jacob cries out to God for help. Jacob thought he was left alone, but He who, twenty-five years ago, was at the top of the ladder, is now at the bottom. The crisis hour has come.

Solomon declares, "The crooked cannot be straight." God says, "The crooked shall be made straight," and "I will make the crooked straight." God stands by this slippery, sharp, sordid, selfish, tricky supplanter and says, "This night settles it. From this time on the meanness must go, or the manhood, the light must go out, or cease its constant flickering." Jacob had been giving God one-tenth of his money and one-seventh of his time, but now God will have him, rather than his. It is easy to straighten a sprout, but to take the twist out of a knotted oak is not so easy. God had to break him before he could make him straight. That night God plunged Jacob into the furnace, not to destroy him, but to destroy the dross, to burn out the dirt, to refine him.

*"In the furnace God did prove him  
Thence to bring him forth more bright."*

Jacob is most precious ore, but he is so hid in carnal rock that only the fierce fire can purify him.

All the night long God wrestled, but Jacob would

not yield. At last, when the day breaks, God breaks Jacob—his thigh, his self, his crooked nature, and Jacob comes out of that struggle limping but straight. Jacob had always been rare tapestry, but with the wrong side out, with its crooked stitches and big knots and ugly patterns. Now the tapestry is turned, the divine image, and heavenly likeness is seen. From that night Jacob is changed. Changed from hawk to dove, sinner to saint, rogue to the very righteousness of God. “The crooked was made straight.” He was no longer conformed to this world, but transformed.

He received that night a new name, because he received a new nature. “Thy name shall be no longer Jacob, but Israel.” That last syllable, “el,” is the Hebrew for “God.” Bethel is the house of God, Peniel is the face of God, but Israel is the name of God. Jacob was the only man ever given God’s name. Jacob, the supplanter, now, Jacob, the prince of God. An immortal illustration of what God can do with the most unpromising material. A divine Angelo He, who can take a scarred, cracked, worthless marble and chisel from it a heavenly image. Isaiah speaks of God as “the mighty God of Jacob.” It takes a mighty God to make over such a man as Jacob and—us. He makes over Richard Baxter, the cursing infidel, into a flaming evangel. He makes over John Bunyan, the profane Sabbath-breaker,

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## *A CROOKED MAN MADE STRAIGHT*

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into John Bunyan, the mighty apostle. He makes over Samuel Hadley, the dregs of the slums, into the redeemer of the slums. He makes over Jacob into Israel. If there is hope for Jacob, there is hope for all.

From that night on, Jacob is as true to God as the needle is to the pole. Through all the bitter years that followed, when his sons were given over to hatred and murder, even stripped of his best beloved, not once did he let the bitterness fill his heart. One day, many years after, Joseph, now governor of Egypt, sends a chariot for his father. All the way to Egypt, Jacob thinks not of Pharaoh or pyramid, but only of seeing his Joseph. Falling upon his long-lost son's neck, he said, "I had not thought to see thy face, and lo! God hath shown me also thy seed." And he speaks of God's goodness as reaching "unto the uttermost bounds of the everlasting hills." God is always better than we deserve. And in peace and plenty the old patriarch dwelt all the rest of his years.

"And the time drew near when Jacob must die." What a hard word, that word "must." There is no going around it or over it. "Must die" is written of all. "The time draweth nigh." Forget it not. With his twelve sons gathered about his bed, the old man stretches out his hands in parting blessing and then, calmly waits the call home. He sleeps now. They watch for the flut-

tering heart to cease its beating. On a sudden, he starts up and, pointing his bony finger into the far-off, cries, "Shiloh will come." Shiloh, the rest-giver, literally, "he who is rich in peace." Lamech named his son Noah, "the man of rest." But instead of rest there was storm and deluge. Jerusalem means the place of peace, but it was the place of war, rather. But, looking along the length of Jacob's long finger, we see One standing and crying, "Oh, weary body, aching heart, tired life, the Shiloh has come." "We who believe do enter into rest." There is a rest within, to the people of God. "And Jacob was gathered unto his people." Purified, cleansed, Edenized, he was transplanted to the garden of God. There were no bands in his death. He had been at Bethel and Peniel and had seen God.

The crooked was made straight, and he went straight to God.

## VI

### BELSHAZZAR

*The Man Who Was Afraid of Shadows*

Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" said Nebuchadnezzar. It was great Babylon. It took two million men, unlimited treasury, unnumbered years to build her. She had a wall fifteen miles square, three hundred and fifty feet high, eighty-six feet wide. On the top, two hundred and fifty towers touched the clouds. Twenty-five great gates of brass pierced each side, and from them streets ran through the city, fifteen miles long. Bridges connected the housetops, on which were roof-gardens of oriental profusion and beauty. There were none others like them. A branch of the Euphrates flowed through the city and was arched by the greatest bridge of the times. At each end of it there was a palace, one, one and three-quarters miles in circumference, the other, seven and a half miles.

To please his wife, who was from the mountain country of Media, Nebuchadnezzar constructed a great artificial mountain in the midst of the city and surrounded it by artificial hanging gardens.

High arches supporting cement floors, covered with deep soil, bore aloft plants and shrubs and trees of every clime and country. These were kept green and fresh by water forced up. In the middle of the city was the Temple of Belus. Its centre tower was six hundred and sixty feet high, on the top of which was the greatest astronomical observatory of the East. Belus was full of golden images worth more than fifty million dollars.

Sunset in Babylon was most glorious and gorgeous. The two hundred and fifty towers flung their long shadows far across the prairies. The hundred gates of bronze shimmered in the sunlight like gates of gold afire. The playing fountains, under the fading light, looked like liquid silver. When twilight fell the stars shot out like myriad diamonds from the clear, southern sky.

Nebuchadnezzar went to grass and then to the grave and young Belshazzar came to the throne. One night the streets were illumined until they looked like day. Royalty, all aglitter, was everywhere astir. Necklaces of pearls and chains of gold and robes bejewelled, flashed under the flickering lights. All the empire's splendour is moving toward the palace of the king. For, "Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords." Robes rustle, carbuncles flash, cups sparkle, wine flows freely.

"And Belshazzar drank wine before the thou-

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## THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF SHADOWS

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sand." Dancing, music, women, wine. Everywhere is heard the half-drunken shout, "Hurrah for Belshazzar." Dizzy with the wine and the drunken applause, Belshazzar cries out, "Bring the golden vessels which my father Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple at Jerusalem, and let's drink from them." Even Nebuchadnezzar, in all his daring, never dared profane the sacred vessels of God's temple. But Belshazzar filled them to overflowing with the sparkling wine and clicked them to the gods of gold and brass and stone. The lords and ladies cheer till the great rafters ring. The king's ears are deafened with the hand-clapping.

But, on a sudden, in the midst of the revelry, every face is bloodless, the king's, most of all. His knees knock together. He stands aghast. A dark shadow moves across the wall. It looks like a great arm. It is. Now the uncanny fingers write in letters of fire, "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*" Belshazzar quakes and trembles before that creeping shadow. Shadows that night struck more terror to the soul of Belshazzar than could the substance of ten thousand soldiers. Belshazzar sees in the moving apparition the ghost of himself. He who has nothing to fear, fears nothing. But a guilty conscience doth turn men into trembling cowards. Shadows strike terrors to guilty souls. Belshazzar's conscience doth read in the letters

his doom. It was his doom. The king, no longer blear-eyed and drunken, but sober and blanched, hurries messengers for the only man he could trust. Daniel, with awful finger, points to the words and, with more awful voice, reads, "Numbered," "wanting," "divided." "God hath numbered thy days and thy kingdom. Thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to others."

As Daniel spoke there arose shrieks without that would make stout hearts quail. The Medians, who had laid siege to the city for two years, had broken into the city. Their battering-rams were already beating down the doors of the king's palace. With a blood-curdling shout, the barbarian hordes rush in. A hundred darts are hurled at the king. A hundred heels leap upon the fallen body to crush it. "That night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain."

What a chasm between "Belshazzar made a feast to a thousand of his lords," and "that night was Belshazzar the king slain." The chapter opened with music, laughter, dancing, gaiety, wine. It closed with shrieks and blood and a dead king. How often we have seen it repeated. A young man at the opening of the banquet, what fire and force in his face and form. See him now, battered, bent, tattered, torn, kicked into the gutter. Belshazzar slain.

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## *THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF SHADOWS*

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A young man, with what steady eye and firm step, enters the banqueting hall. The gaudily painted, overdressed, underdressed ladies of the court bewitch him. His eye takes on a strange light. The fires of his soul leap into a furious flame. His feet rush down the rapid way to death. Hollow-eyed, haggard, haunted, the fire of his life is quenched. Belshazzar slain. Belshazzar feasted and then fell. Adam feasted and then fell. Dives feasted and then fell. "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." "Thou fool, this night thy soul will be required of thee." Feasted and then fell.

To what base uses a king can put himself. Belshazzar forgets his crown and kingdom, and, drunken and maudlin, he spins about in the giddy dance. Nothing is sacred, nothing holy to him. Fill the goblets of the Lord's house with the king's wine. To what base use the high and holy can be prostituted.

'Twas but yesterday I saw a building, once a church, a vessel of God, now put to sinful use; steeple still towers as though in mockery. Only a little while since, a former proud governor of a proud state, now a morphine fiend and an opium drunkard, stood in one of our courts to be sentenced for his crimes. How are the high and holy fallen. To what base uses a king can put himself. Not stars, not flowers, not creation, but man

is the great mystery. How the angel in him can soar. How the beast in him grovels. How he fires with virtue and valour, how he enflames with vice and viciousness.

The secret of Belshazzar's downfall was, he forgot God. Daniel's charge against him was, "The God in whose hands thy breath is, hast thou not glorified." "In whose hand thy breath is," "in whom you live and move and have your being." Everything is God-given, therefore, "the chief end of man is to glorify God." When Nebuchadnezzar, proud and puffed up, forgot God, God took him off the throne and turned him out with the beasts of the field for seven years until he remembered God. All this Belshazzar knew, and yet he forgot God. Having forgotten God, he became drunken, sacrilegious and lascivious. In listing those who are turned into hell, the Scriptures climax with "all that forget God."

Forgetting God is the supreme sin. It's the root of sins. If there were no forgetting God, there would be no harlot in the streets, no men untrue to their sacred vows, no gamblers, no den owners, no brothel-keepers. Forgetting God is the sin of the world. But while Belshazzar forgot God, God did not forget Belshazzar. It was God's finger that wrote, "Weighed, wanting, finished."

It's not so easy to get away from God. Cain

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## *THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF SHADOWS*

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thought he had accomplished it. He rushed out from the presence of the Lord, only to rush into His presence. Lot tried it, and lo! the angel of the Lord stood before him face to face. One who tried it and failed cried, "Whither can I go from thy presence?" The answer is—nowhere. "God is here, God is there, God is everywhere; go where you will, you meet Him." Just when we are rid of God a finger writes across the shadow, "Thou, God, seest me."

Shadows are awful things. You can bar the windows and barricade the doors against the burglar and the thief, but you can't keep out the shadows. They will creep in through cracks and crevices which do not exist. Ah, the ghostly shadows, the sepulchral voices that haunt us out of the past. Jacob's sons sinned greatly against their brother, Joseph, and twenty years after the ghost of their foul doings arose out of Egypt like a shadow and made them turn pale. Ahab put Naboth to death, foully and falsely slew him. He forgot his deed for many a year, when lo! he trembles before the ghost of his bloody crime.

A man paces up and down his room, sleep gone from him, terror in his eye, fear in every feature, hair dishevelled, his face the face of death. He shudders as he paces to and fro. His hands clutch, his muscles twitch, his soul cries out, "Avaunt and quit my sight." Shadows! shadows! shadows of

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## MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY

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deeds done, shadows of sins committed, shadows of a crooked past. What horrors they strike to the soul. Shadows are awful things.

In the torture of his fear Belshazzar hurries messengers out for Daniel. Wasn't Daniel at the feast? No. This wine-drinking, woman-loving, religion-scoffing king wants no preacher of righteousness at his feast. But when the shadows creep along the wall, and fall athwart the life—shadows of sin unsatisfied, shadows of death and casket and open grave—send for the preacher.

Belshazzar wants some one to explain the mysterious letters. Rather, he wants some one to explain them away. He feels God's presence in the air. He sees God's finger in the writing. "Get us a man to explain it away." Get us a man to explain away the judgment day, future retribution. Get us a man who can drop a curtain down between us and these awful things. The curtain can't be dropped down.

"*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*"—these words were not a warnin, but a verdict, a judgment. "Thou hast been numbered and the last number is in, thou hast been weighed and found short, thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians." Facing his doom, Belshazzar would give anything to undo the past, to right his wrongs, but it is too late. There is nothing left now, but "that night was Belshazzar slain." Like Esau,

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## *THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF SHADOWS*

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with bitter tears, he sought a place for repentance, but could find none.

There comes a too late. When the roof is falling in, it is too late to save the burning house. When the ship is going to pieces on the rocks, it is too late to rescue her. There is a "too late." God is a God of mercy. He is also a God of judgment. Belshazzar had had his years of mercy, now he has his day of judgment. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his heart shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Belshazzar had to face the handwriting on the wall. There are handwritings on the wall that we must face. One night a Doge of Venice drinking and carousing with his fellows, stirring from his drunken stupour, the lights having burned out, there blazed before him on the wall, in letters of fire, "Prepare to meet thy God." Cold sweat streamed from his brow. The letters burned into his very soul, and that night he heeded the warning and prepared to meet his God. Blessed the man who heeds the handwriting on the wall.

On the first of last year a young man read on the wall, "This year thou shalt die." He went from the blazing letters jesting and making sport. In six short weeks was written, "dead." 'Tis written on the wall, "The soul that sinneth shall die," "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Heed the writing of warning on the

wall. "Tis also written, "Whosoever will, may come," "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Hear the writing of hope.

"That night was Belshazzar slain." In the midst of the drinking and the revelling was he slain. Death broke in on him as sudden as the lightning breaks from the clouds. "That night—slain." While men were eating and drinking and marrying, the deluge broke. While men were buying and selling and bartering, the brimstone fell upon Sodom. While men were laughing and chatting and sporting the walls of Jericho went down with a crash. While the cars were thundering through the streets, carrying men to business and to pleasure, the floods rushed upon Galveston and swept her into the sea.

"The Lord shall suddenly come, in such an hour as ye think not." "Watch, lest, coming suddenly, he find you asleep." "Suddenly." There is no more dire word in the tongue than that. Suddenly, the pulse stops beating, the heart stops throbbing, the lungs stop breathing, the eye stops seeing, the ear stops hearing.

"That night was Belshazzar slain." Adam sinned, and "that night" was he driven out of the garden. Achan stole, and "that night" was he stoned. Samson committed his great and wicked folly, and "that night" were his eyes gouged out. Slain suddenly. Saved suddenly.

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## *THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID OF SHADOWS*

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Peter, sinking, cried, "Lord, save," and he was suddenly saved. The publican prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me," and he suddenly found mercy. The door of mercy and hope and salvation was forever locked against Belshazzar. He knocked too late. For you, this hour the door of mercy swings wide open. Love beseeches. Hope beckons. Pardon for all sins. Salvation for all sinners. He came to seek and to save the worst. By the cross He would turn thy godlessness to Godlikeness.

## VII

### DANIEL

*The Man Who Continued*

**N**ABOPOLASSAR, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus came and went, but "Daniel continued." Greater than Bismarck, Gladstone, or Webster was Daniel; for seventy years premier of Babylon. Though cabinets rose and fell, though rulers lived and died, though the empire was conquered and reconquered, and the very government changed, "Daniel continued." He saw five kings of Babylon, four kings of Judah, and many kings of Assyria, Egypt and Persia come and go. The Greek sages, Anaximander, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, came on the stage and departed, but "Daniel continued." To get and to hold such positions of such political power, he must have had a great pull. He had. He had the pull that exalteth a man—righteousness. The pull of unsullied manhood, uprightness, honest endeavour, loyalty to God. Such a pull is a good thing to have. Look to your pull. Later we are told the secret of why Daniel continued, because "he served God continually."

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## THE MAN WHO CONTINUED

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Of no other man who has left his footprints on the leaves of history are there written so many mighty sentences in so few pages as of Daniel: "Without blemish," "He purposed in his heart," "He would not defile himself," "Of whom Daniel was first," "Daniel was preferred," "He had an excellent spirit," "There was no fault in him," "For he was faithful."

And these sentences are written of whom? A slave, a Jewish captive. He climbed to the premiership, carrying the ball and chain with him. "Kites rise against the wind, not with it." "Adversity is the prosperity of the great." Some of the most beautiful toys of today are made by L'home Trono, a man with neither legs nor arms. Hindrances are helps. Being nothing but a tallow-dip catcher helped Franklin to become a lightning catcher. Waving a rod over the sheep helped David to wave a sceptre over a throne. Crowther, the slave, becomes the Bishop of Africa. Douglass, the slave, becomes the orator of America. Daniel, the slave, becomes prime minister of Babylon. Professor Drummond says, "Before an artist can do anything the instrument must be attuned." Daniel's captivity attuned him for mighty melodies. But we must study a few of the great sentences written of this slave who became greater than king.

"In whom there was no blemish." What words

to be written of any man. These words were written of Daniel's body. They were true of his inner self. There was no canker eating at his soul; no vulture gnawing at his conscience. Shut up alone at night in his room, he had the best of company—himself. A young man was seen rushing from his room at night as though fiends were after him. One accosted him with, "Where are you going?" And received for answer, "Anywhere, it is worse than perdition alone in that room." To be pitied, he who finds himself bad company. Blessed he, who finds himself the best of company. Virtue does bring its own reward. James defines religion as "unspottedness." Of whom it can be written, "without blemish," of him it can be written, "without misery."

"But Daniel purposed in his heart." Says some one, "Give us a man with a purpose." They fail, and they alone, who have no purpose. While yet a mere lad, Lord Nelson said, "I will be a hero;" and he became a hero. Starting into life, Sir Joshua Reynolds resolved to become a master artist, and he became one. William Paley, while in college, purposed to become great in letters. Shaking off sleep and arising at four in the morning, he became a master in literature. Disraeli, stammering through his first speech in parliament, said, "You'll hear from me some day." And they did.

Dr. D. K. Pearson, when a young man, went to

Chicago, and on the way there said, "I am going to become rich and help small colleges and poor students." Up to his death he had given to small colleges fifty-four million dollars, and through it he brought more than eighteen million dollars to the same colleges, and he helped literally hundreds of poor students through. "He purposed in his heart." When Thomas Edison was a youth he said, "What is, might be better." And he purposed in his heart to make things electric better. Under the flash of the electric light, answer, did he? The space between a man's high purpose and himself is his opportunity.

The man with a purpose is the man with a plan. He fixes his eye on a target. He aims. He determines. He is not driven about by every wind that blows. He is no drifter. He is not double-minded. Some one has said, "Everything is possible to the man with a purpose." Another said, "Everything is possible to the man who plans." The man with a purpose is the man with a plan. Of one it has been written, "His was a great life." Of the same one it has been said, "He had a great plan." It takes a great plan to make a great life. Hannah Moore says, "A good packer gets in twice as much as a bungler." A good packer is the man with a purpose and a plan. When Sir Thomas Lipton was told that a Glasgow syndicate was about to raise a fund to build a challenger for the

American cup, he replied, "Oh, there is money enough to be had in Scotland and men enough to build a boat, but what we need is a designer." Wanted—designers, planners, successors; men with a purpose, Daniels.

"He would not defile himself." The Queen of Sweden, being asked why she had such rigid rules for the daily life of her daughter, said, "Because she is training for a throne." He who would become a king among men cannot defile himself. In an interview, on his ninety-second birthday, Chauncey Depew said, "The most ruinous thing to young men is modern high society, with its late hours and genteel carousing. A young man needs all his vital force for his career." The king's meat and wine play havoc with the young man's forces of body and soul. Self-denial and self-restraint are hard.

Self-indulgence is easy. Lacking self-restraint, being carried away by self-indulgence, at thirty-three Alexander went the way of those who defile themselves. Though Rome had no greater son than Anthony, lacking self-restraint, he went through Egyptian dissipation to destruction. Dissipation always leads to destruction. How easy to defile the body. How easier to defile the soul. Great crowds on the way down, met Daniel on the way up. To defile one's self—that's not difficult. To redeem and recover one's self—how difficult.

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## THE MAN WHO CONTINUED

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To do is easy. To undo—that's the trouble. One drop of red paint will taint a whole pail of white. But one drop of white will not restore the lost purity. A man took a piece of white cloth to a dyer to have it dyed black. Later he took it to the dyer to have it dyed white again. The dyer said, "It can't be done." A piece of cloth is like a man's character, it can easily be dyed black, but to make it white again—that's a different matter. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Our real danger is not from without, but from within. Our only hope is from a holy purpose, not to defile ourselves, and living true to that purpose.

"An excellent spirit was in him." We have heard of the boy who, by mistake, read it, "An excellent spine was in him." Not so great a mistake, after all. An English veteran with a cork leg insisted on being sent over to France during the World War. "But," protested the recruiting officer, "you couldn't run with that leg." Answered the veteran, "England doesn't want men who will run." The world wants men who will stand. Of this same Daniel we read, "Daniel stood." "An excellent spirit was in him." An excellent spirit was in Luther, and today we have a free Bible. An excellent spirit was in Paul, and the world heard the gospel. Years ago, at a dinner at Eton, a coarse toast was proposed. All arose

and drank it with loud guffaws. All, except one young man who turned his glass down and kept his seat in silent protest. The banqueters were dumb and amazed that a man dared do such a thing, and many were the hisses. But that young man with the excellent spirit in him we now call the Grand Old Man of England, William Ewart Gladstone.

There is one radical difference between a jelly-fish and a man, spirit, spine. The Babylonian crowds were jelly-fish. Daniel was a man. Pope says, "Hack off the marble and let's get at the man." David said to Solomon, "Show yourself a man." The apostle exhorts, "Quit you like men." One night at a Chautauqua, Bishop Vincent, sitting on a high porch, called to a friend passing, "Come on up, this is a good place to be." Come on up. Holmes says, "It is not where a man is standing, but which way he is moving that determines." Possessed of an excellent spirit, Daniel ever moved upward. The spirit within a man determines which way he moves. Be a Daniel.

"He was faithful." When police commissioner of New York, Theodore Roosevelt gave us the sentence, "Better faithful than famous." That was Daniel's motto. John Wanamaker says, "The trouble with the average American boy is, he doesn't stick." He isn't reliable, stable, bankable, faithful. "A man's value, like a postage stamp,

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## THE MAN WHO CONTINUED

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depends upon his ability to stick to a thing until he gets there." Daniel not only possessed courage and energy and perseverance and ability, but, more than all, that divine quality so often wanting, faithfulness. I have watched with much interest the newsboy who last year was taken into the employ of one of Chicago's largest banking houses. Two years before, the president of the bank told the boy that he wanted his paper delivered at two o'clock, not earlier, not later. And for two years, at the stroke of the clock, the boy stood before the president's desk, paper in hand. Never once did the banker pay him more than the regular price. After two years of such testing the banker decided that a boy who could be so faithful in a little, had it in him to be ruler over much. And that boy has begun his upward climb.

Mr. Mallory, the chief helper of Mr. Edison, has over his desk, "Blessed the man who has found his place and fills it." He who fills his place, finds his place. Water seeks its level. Daniel found his place and filled it. You always knew where to find him—in his place. Some one has spoken of Daniel as a genius. He was such a genius as Ruskin speaks of when he says, "When I hear of a young man being a genius, I always ask, 'Does he work? Does he stick to his work?'" We read, "Then the king made Daniel a great man." Little the king had to do with it. Daniel's faithfulness made

him great. When Cecil Rhodes died, a few years ago, his last words were, "So little done—so much to do." So much to be done, and at best we can do but little. Let us live so that it may be written of us, "He was faithful."

"Of whom Daniel was first." No man, king, governor, or prince, left such an impress on Babylon as did this foreign slave. In all things he was first. The first figure, 1, and the ninth letter, I, are almost identical, and are the only things that stand for individuality. "All men are born equal." But it all depends on how they use their equality as to whether they stay equal. One has exhorted, "Never wait for the crowd." Daniel didn't. He climbed past sages and legislators and princes and soon it was written, "Of whom Daniel was first." A present captain of industry, twenty-eight years ago entered a commercial house, a subordinate indeed. He wrote on the walls of his little room these immortal sentences of Daniel we have quoted, and today, in listing the captains of industry, we are compelled to say, "Of whom this man is first." These are the rungs that lead to the top.

"Then was Daniel preferred above the presidents and the princes." Rather, Daniel outshone them. That is no marvel. The great light-house outshines the flickering candle. The mighty sun outshines the twinkling star. But if there is anything a smoky wick despises, it's the king of day

that outshines its feeble glimmer. The princes of Babylon must find a way or make one to put out this great light. But, setting themselves about the task, "they could find no fault in him." It is a great thing when one's enemies are compelled to say of a man, "We can find no fault in him." Here was one life, faultless. Pilate could find no fault in Christ, but He had to go to the cross nevertheless. To rid themselves of Daniel, the princes, unable to find a way, must make a way. There is one thing Daniel does that the other princes do not do. Three times a day, at his open window, on his knees, with his face toward Jerusalem, he prays. They have found a way. They will flatter the king by saying, "Oh, king, thou art our god, pass now a decree that whoever prays to any god for thirty days, save to thee, shall be cast into the den of lions." How flattery makes fools of men. 'Tis done, and the great seal is fixed.

Daniel reads the decree and then? And then for thirty days Daniel prays, standing. There is plenty of Scripture for that. Solomon prayed, standing at the dedication of the Temple. The apostle says, "When ye pray standing." Or, Daniel prays with his window closed, so that no one can see him, or with his back to Jerusalem, then no one can tell whether he is praying or not; or for thirty days Daniel prays in his heart, omitting the form, the form is nothing; or, if need be, he stops

praying for a brief thirty days. That would not be difficult—for us. Daniel does none of these things, but three times a day, on his knees, with his window up and his face toward Jerusalem, he prays to God as before time. He was of those who say, “Thirty days without praying? Better thirty days without eating, or sleeping, or seeing, or breathing. ‘Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath, the Christian’s native air.’” There is no compromise with Daniel. He will be right with God and take his chances. When the mob was attacking George Whitfield and he was on the point of yielding, his wife sent him word, “Play the man, George.”

When heaven and Babylon came in conflict it took Daniel but a moment to decide which. He stood like Elijah before Ahab, John the Baptist before Herod, Paul before Nero, and, like them, went to the lions. But, better Daniel in the lions’ den than Darius on the throne. The shaggy neck of the lion is softer than Darius’ downy pillow. “Then was the king greatly troubled, and sleep went from him.” But Daniel sweetly slept, and in the morning, at the word of the king, walked forth unhurt, “Because he served God continually.” That was the secret of Daniel’s greatness. “He served God continually.” What means a lion’s paw to a man who serves God continually? The worst it can mean is coronation. Cut “he

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### *THE MAN WHO CONTINUED*

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served God continually" out of Daniel's life, and you cut Daniel out of history.

The great sentences we have read of him are all branches from one root—God. Oh that men would learn the lesson! I saw a ship, tossed and tumbled on the waves. The winds tugged at it, the storm pulled at it, the waters tore at it, and would have hurled it to pieces on the rocks, but they couldn't. It was anchored. The storms of persecution, the winds of hatred, the paw of the lion could not hurl Daniel to death, because he was anchored. "He served God continually."

## VIII

### SAUL

*The Man of Indecision*

**S**AUL, the young king of Israel, towered head and shoulders above the crowd, but he had a very weak back. You could always tell what Saul believed—what the man believed who last talked with him. Saul was a chameleon, taking his colour from his last association. Indecision was his great weakness. *Indecision* proved his undoing. His indecision slew him.

Webster says a man of indecision is like the sea at the turn of the tide; it neither advances nor recedes, but only hesitates. Motley says, "The indecision of Charles V. changed the destinies of the civilized world." Janus, the Roman deity, had two faces. Facing two ways, Janus faced no way. Saul was the Janus of Israel. Like Ephraim, who turned back in the day of battle, Saul lacked decision and enduring qualities, and failed. Indecision with Saul was not a mere foible, but the sin that wrecked him and his empire.

Saul was a son of the field, a giant in length and strength. He towered head and shoulders above

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## *THE MAN OF INDECISION*

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the people. "There was none other like him." He had an over-towering body, like a Samson, a Goliath, a Milo. It is not written of him, "an over-towering mind," like a Milton, a Bacon, an Aristotle; or "over-towering morals," like a Luther, a Wesley, a Paul. A giant in body; but there his gianthood ceased. He was great in many things, but not in that moral decision that makes a man. Premeditated wickedness slays its thousands; lack of moral decision, its tens of thousands. Like Lot, lacking moral decision, Saul drifted to the Sodom of his doom. Like Pilate, lacking moral decision, his hands dripped with blood which he fain would have washed off. Like Judas, his indecision became the rope of his suicide. Like Felix, he trembled and hesitated and failed. Like Agrippa, "almost, but lost." Saul reminds us of Burns, Byron and Burr, that trinity of kings, ruined because they lacked the stalwartness of manhood. Saul's opportunity was the greatest. He was the first king of Israel. God was behind him, Samuel beside him, united Israel for him. When Samuel brought him into the presence of the people with, "See you him who is to rule over you," the people hailed him with the shout, "God save the king;" the shout that ever since has welcomed kings to their thrones. To Saul all things were possible. One strong stroke would have made him master of Israel and conqueror of the world.

The Romans, hard pressed by the Gauls, consented to purchase immunity with gold. As the gold was being weighed, Camillus rushed into the midst and, flinging his sword into the scales, said, "Rome shall not purchase peace; Rome shall win it." And Rome won it. Had Saul but flung the sword of kingly decision into the scales, he would have made himself and his people masters. But he hesitated, and was lost.

The morning of Saul's life opened up full of bright promise and sunshine. But before noon the day was struck through with chilly night. The critical hour coming, when one word of decisive firmness would have settled forever his future, and the future greatness of his kingdom, lacking that moral strength that makes for might, yielding to the petty clamour of the people, all was lost. His pitiful excuse was, "I feared the people." A people who would have cowered before a thundering "No." Lacking that that could thunder "No," coward-like he pushes the responsibility for his misdeeds back upon the weak and ignorant people. Pushing responsibility back on others has been humanity's cloak of cover ever since Adam's "The woman did it."

At the beginning of the chapter we read, "The Lord gave Saul another heart, and the spirit of God came upon him, and he built an altar unto the Lord. And there was with Saul a band of men

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## THE MAN OF INDECISION

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whose hearts God had touched." You'll hunt long before you find a man who began better equipped than did Saul. With one sharp battle he drove the Amorites and Amalekites and Philistines before him like chaff. He started well. But the start is not all. The beginning is not the end. A cloudless dawn does not always presage a cloudless day. Saul put on the armour and sallied forth, fought and won a great battle, and then acted as though that were the end. His fatal mistake was the mistake of the world. He failed to remember that life is not a battle, but a war. Life is warfare, battles continuous. One charge and one victory does not end the campaign. There must be no laying off the armour. Every foot of the way must be won by the sword. To start well is well. To end well is the great thing. "He that is faithful unto the end shall receive a crown." One, in a meeting, said, "When will this fight be over?" The leader replied, "At the coffin-lid." "Sure I must fight if I would win."

We have recently been furnished with the startling statement that more men make shipwreck between forty and fifty than between twenty and thirty. And the explanation given is that, feeling secure because of past safety, they fail to keep the gates locked, and the enemy steals in unawares and dynamites the citadel of their manhood. To come off victor means to keep ever in mind that

life is not a battle, but a war; that it is a fight all the way along, all the way up, all the way over. To begin well is well. But to end well is the great thing.

Going against the mighty king Agag, the order from God to Saul was to slay the king and utterly destroy everything. Yielding to his pride to bring back a living trophy of his victory, Saul saved the king alive and led in his triumph the fattest of the flocks and the fairest of the field. Flush with his victory, deafened by the shouts of the people, 'twas with a shock that he met face to face the hoary-headed prophet, Samuel, who, pointing to the bleating sheep and the lowing cattle and the captive king, lets fall those awful words of doom, "Thou hast disobeyed—thou shalt die."

To disobey is to die. Disobedience is death. The man who disobeys the law of gravity and steps off the edge of the building's roof lies crushed on the pavement beneath. The man who disobeys the law of heat, and thrusts his hand into the furnace, carries ever after the charred stub. The man who disobeys the law of solids and liquids and pushes his feet out over the waters of the sea, his bones bleach on the bottom of the ocean. He who disobeys the law, "Thou shalt not kill," finds the gallows. He who disobeys the law, "Thou shalt not steal," finds the jail. He who disobeys the law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," finds his soul

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tied to a festering body of corruption. The laws of God are written with finger of flame across the sky of the world and across the conscience of the soul. It is dangerous to disobey. It is death to disobey. Hear it, ye who count the keeping of God's laws a trifling thing. Saul lost all "because he obeyed not the voice of the Lord."

To disobey has the root significance, "to break." Saul broke with God and thereby broke the back of his power. And from that hour a very madness possessed him. His jealousy of the lad David became a very rage. He tracked him like a blood-hound from cave to cave. His fury consumed him. He hurled javelins at the son of his heart. Demon hate blinded him. He lived on gall. He drank wormwood. Being full of bitterness, he found bitterness everywhere. Once started downward, having taken his hand from the brake, every mile down increased the speed until he shot on to the crash, with wheels afire.

The ruin of a city, a temple or a tower is always pathetic. When 'tis the ruin of a man 'tis tragic. Saul, Solomon, Napoleon, William II. are the four great wrecks of history. Madness slew them. Poet and artist, orator and musician have all lingered long over this great tragedy. He who has not read Browning's "Saul," or listened to Chopin's "Death march in Saul," has not only missed much in art and poetry, but has also

missed many of the warnings that make for life's strength.

With a pathetic fascination the world's masters of pen and pencil have pictured the rapid descent of the king, crowned, sceptred, holding the destiny of the empire—down, discrowned, unsceptred, broken, kneeling before the witch of Endor. For, Samuel dead, Saul's reason awhirl, his brain afire, the Philistine host upon him, the heavens brass, he cries, "Seek me out a woman that hath a familiar spirit." And at midnight, this once great king goes hunting around in dark caves and hiding-places, for a spiritual medium. "How are the mighty fallen."

Penned in on every side, with no way of escape, there broke from his lips the confession, "I have sinned." We have the warrant of Scripture, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us." But we have also the warning of Scripture, "Esau sought a place for repentance, and found it not, though he sought it bitterly with tears." There can be a confessing and a repenting, too late. After the ship has gone to pieces on the rock, it is too late to confess that it was a mistake to put out to sea. After the building is burned, it is too late to be sorry to have played with fire. After the Christ is crucified, it is too late to confess, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." The time to do a thing is the time it

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ought to be done. The time to put out the fire is when it starts. The time to strike for the shore is when the boat is upset. The time to mend is when the rent is first made. The time to be saved—now. In that strange book, *Babs the Impossible*, Babs cries out, “Cadenhouse, give me one more chance.” But the one more chance didn’t come. Saul had his chance, and didn’t take it.

“*There’s a time we know not when,  
A place we know not where—  
That marks the destiny of man  
To glory or despair.*”

“Behold the day cometh, saith the Lord, when they shall wander from sea to sea and north to east, and shall run to and fro to seek the Lord, and shall not find him.” ’Tis an hour more bitter than death when man hunts, with breaking heart, for a place of repentance and finds it not. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.” Saul confesses that God will not hear by prayer or prophet, by sob or cry. God could not hear him. His iniquity had deafened God’s ears. His sin had built a wall high and impenetrable between his soul and his God. When he would break through, alas! he could not. God was indeed deaf to his cries.

Saul rushes out into the darkness of his doom, with that most awful sentence of all history breaking in a shriek from his lips, “The Lord hath de-

parted from me.” He stood pale as Agrippa before Paul, trembling as Pilate before Christ, quaking as Ahab before Elijah, terrified as Pharaoh before Moses. He hears the distant rumble of the artillery that thundered his destiny. Desperately and despairingly, he rushes into the battle of Gilboa. “The battle was sore against the king.” And in the thick of the fight, stripped of defenders, like Brutus, Cassius and Nero, he falls on his sword and dies. That night the cold stars looked down on his upturned dead face bathed in its own blood. How still he lies.

I asked a friend, who had visited Paris, what, in the great French city, impressed him the most. He answered, “The tomb of Napoleon.” People by the thousands every day come to look down upon the great sarcophagus. I asked him what he thought as he stood and looked upon it. He answered, “I thought, how still he lies.” The man who shook Europe with the thunder of his guns, how still he lies. How still Israel’s king lies. The hand that waved the sceptre, the head that wore the crown—how still.

Saul is dead. He was dead years before he died. Strange paradox; awful truth. There is a death worse than death. Many have a name to live and are dead. The king is dead. The life that opened so full of brightness has gone out with clouds. The river that began with a sparkling brook has ended

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### *THE MAN OF INDECISION*

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in a marsh. The poet tells us that when Saul lay dead, the people did not weep because the king was dead, but because they remembered the young man who began with such high promise; they remembered his overtowering visage, his noble brow, his fire-flamed eye—remembering these, and now looking upon the ruin of all their hopes as centred in the young king, they wept sore. All that is left of the great oak is the lightning-shattered stump. All that is left of the great building is the blackened and broken wall. All that is left of the mighty ship is the worm-eaten hull. Saul is dead.

One has said, “The grave swallows all. Here grief finds a cure, usefulness a period, glory a decay, pride a destroyer.” The grave does not swallow all, any more than death ends all. The most that can be uttered over any grave is, “Here endeth the first lesson.” We set a thousand waves beating against the shores of time; they beat on and on, forever on. The grave does not swallow all. “The evil that men do lives after them.” We strive for many things—bags of gold, strings of jewels, exalted positions among men. These are but the hay and wood and stubble of life. We strive for many things, but the only thing that lives and lasts is character.

After the death of Hugh Mainwaring, whose death unmasked his soul and revealed the blackness thereof, we read, “If one wishes to leave

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*MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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behind him an untarnished reputation, he must back it up while living, with an unblemished character." "Glass, china and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended." Man has his choice and his chance of leaving behind him a blaze of light, or black night. Saul had his choice and his chance, and he left his name a muddy mark across history's page.

## IX

### DAVID

*The Man Every Inch a King*

**B**Y every standard of men and of angels, David was every inch a king. He found Israel divided, he left her united. He found Israel weak and conquered, he left her strong and victorious. He found Israel with no national capital and no national building. He left her Jerusalem for a capital, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," and left his son and heir two hundred million dollars of gold with which to erect a temple greater than Parthenon, Pantheon or St. Peter's. There would have been no Solomon's glory if there had been no David's greatness.

When David came to Israel's throne she was a by-word among nations, while Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, China were great empires. In a few brief years he made Israel to overtower them all. Other rulers of his time were smashers, he was a builder. Now and then we forget Joseph, Daniel, and even Moses, but we never forget David. He was a great warrior, a far-seeing

statesman, a wise king. "He was an Achilles and a Ulysses, an Aurelius and a Theodosius, an Alfred and a St. Louis combined." He had the meekness of Alfred the Great and the magnetism of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was as self-sacrificing as Marcus Aurelius and as devoted as Moses. He was as fearless as Julius Cæsar and as tender as Jeremiah.

Other men are remembered for what they wrought. He is remembered for what he wrought and wrote. No other man ever so sung himself into the hearts and the lives of the people of all times as did David. And I forget not that the world has had its Homers, Shakespeares, Miltos. England's greatest poet laureate declares David's lament over Jonathan to be the sweetest and the saddest strain in the world of song. We are told that when the genius of the erratic Byron flagged he refreshed himself in the clear, fresh mountain-springs of David's songs. To this perennial spring have come all of earth's poets, for three thousand years, to drink inspiration. To this fountain has gone, and ever will go, the world for comfort and consolation.

Moses is remembered for his laws, Solomon for his proverbs, Isaiah for his prophecies, Jeremiah for his lamentations, Paul for his letters. But, more than all, David is remembered for his Psalms. The temple is in ruins, Jerusalem is laid waste,

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## THE MAN EVERY INCH A KING

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Israel is scattered, the sceptre is departed from Judah, but the Psalms live. As long as men shall live, so long will they pour out their songs and their sobs in the language of the Sweet Singer of Israel. The sermons of men die, the Psalms of David live. What shouts of jubilee, what outbursts of praise, what heights of sublimity, what depths of pathos, what sweet tenderness pour forth from the Psalms.

As Emerson said of Montaigne's essays, so can be said of David's Psalms, "Cut those words and they would bleed." He sang not "of heroes and of arms," as did Virgil, but of God and of the soul. As one has said, "He raises mortals to the skies, though he brings no angels down." Luther's battle-cry was the Sixty-First Psalm, "Our God is a strong tower." The battle-song of the Huguenots was the Sixty-Eighth Psalm. The slogan of the Reformation was the Forty-Sixth Psalm. "God is our refuge and strength." Cromwell and his armies, at the victory of Dunbar, chanted the One Hundred and Seventeenth Psalm, "Praise the Lord, all ye nations." What thousands have gone into the hard battle of life helped by "The Lord is my shepherd." What countless multitudes have been made victorious by "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will help thee." And what millions have gone into the dark valley of death comforted with "Though

I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
I will not fear, for thou art with me."

*"O thou sweet singer of a favored race,  
What vast results to thy pure songs we trace!  
How varied and how rich are all thy lays,  
On Nature's glories and Jehovah's ways."*

The story of David is the story that charmed our childhood. We went with him to watch the sheep. We helped him hunt smooth pebbles for his sling. We stood breathless as we listened to the defiance he hurled at Goliath. We heard the little pebble whizz. We could not believe our eyes as we saw the giant fall. How we clapped our hands when the women shouted, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." How we envied him as he thrummed his harp in the king's palace. How we shuddered as we saw the jealous and enraged king hurl at him his javelin. With what sadness we followed him from cave to cave, hunted by the blood-thirsty king. It was a red letter day of our childhood, the day we saw him march with his six hundred mighty men to the throne.

The day Samuel visited the house of Jesse, the Lord told him he would see Israel's future king. As Eliab, the eldest, came before him with kingly stature and noble bearing, Samuel said, "This is he." But the Lord said, "This is not he." And so

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## THE MAN EVERY INCH A KING

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He said of the seven sons of Jesse. At last, when the little lad David, who was tending the sheep, was brought in, the Lord said, "This is he." And then God announced the truth, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh on the outward appearance, the Lord looketh upon the heart." Man looketh upon the clothes, the Lord upon the character. Man is concerned with the skin, the Lord with the soul. Man measures the head, the Lord the heart. The heart is the important thing. As is the heart, so is the man. It was but yesterday I read, "He died of heart failure." Heart failure is the fatal disease. Because Eliab had a kingly form, Samuel reasoned he must be a king. Even Samuel had to learn that real kingliness is of the soul. Many are kings in form who are not kings in fact. Many are contemptible in person who are kings indeed.

On the way to coronation, David had to fight the giant Goliath. If he had not come off victor over Goliath he never would have worn the crown. There are giants on the way to the throne. The world is one. It has slain its thousands. Ask Cleopatra, Tiberius, Herod, and the answer of all is the answer of Hume, "The world is a monster to slay." Men rush after the world, thinking if they can only get it, it will satisfy. Getting it, lo! it's a Goliath to slay. The world does not satisfy, it slays.

The flesh is another giant on the way to the throne. The world is a giant without, the flesh is the giant within. "In ourselves is victory or defeat." Man's worst foes are within. He who conquers himself conquers all. The Devil is another giant one meets on the way. Job, Moses, Joseph, all met this giant. Christ fought three bloody battles with him. You cannot escape him. He will meet you in store and street, home and business, everywhere. Your only means of escape is the Sword of the Spirit, wherewith ye shall be able to ward off the evil one.

Another giant to be overcome before you reach the throne is death. You cannot fight that giant alone. When the dying sceptic cried, "Take him off," the giant death was upon him. There is but One strong enough to deliver. He with the scarred brow and torn hands. Fear not the giants that kill the body, but fear the giants that kill the soul.

David had also to climb to the throne against Saul's javelin and Saul's jealousy. The javelin was sharp, the jealousy was sharper. Jealousy has slain more than the javelin. There are daggers in the sentence, "Saul eyed David." From such eyes deliver us. But at last, in spite of javelins and jealousy, fightings and fears, David sits upon the throne. And there followed years of unequalled prosperity and power.

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## *THE MAN EVERY INCH A KING*

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David is now fifty years old. He is secure from foes without and safe from enemies within. One day he walks on the roof of the palace, out under the soft oriental skies. He lifts his eyes. A strange fire springs to them. A woman bathes in yonder pool, of figure and face most entrancing. David looks and lusts and falls. No blacker sin can be found recorded than the sin that David committed. God pictures David's sin in all its hideousness. He gives us David at his best and at his worst. Man does not write biography thus. God offers no word of defense for the king's black sin, nor does He palliate or excuse it. "The thing David did greatly displeased the Lord."

For fifty years David lived a life as stainless as snow. When he was persecuted and hunted, while he was young, you read of no yielding to those passions that blind men to right and conscience. But at fifty David fell. This but emphasizes the statement previously made, that more men make moral shipwreck between forty and fifty than between twenty and thirty. Living on the delicacies of the palace, lying in the lap of luxury, unchained the passions and weakened the man, and the sight of the woman of enticing form, proved his undoing, and his sin has left a stain forever on his name and his fame.

For a time David acted as though, because his

sin was hid, it was forgotten. But the fire in the hold of the ship will break out. The waves of the sea cannot be kept down. The thunder's voice will not be muffled. Saul's sheep will bleat. Be sure your sin will get out. Even when it was hid from others David was all too conscious of his crime. He tells us his "bones waxed old through their roaring all the day long."

Cynical sceptics and scoffing critics, creatures living in glass houses, have ever been given to pointing out the blotches on David's life and character. The great black blotch is there. God did not attempt to cover it. Let not us. The diamond has lost its lustre. The marble is mud-covered. The glory is faded from the crown. The Lord did not look with any allowance or laxity on David's sin. David found it was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The Lord sent the Prophet Nathan to the king with the story of the shameful wrong done by some imaginary person, and asks, "What ought to be done to such an one?" David's face fires with indignation as he says, "Such an one ought to die." Then, like a bolt of lightning out of a cloudless sky, breaks from the prophet's lips, "Thou art the man." Did the king thunder anathema at the prophet? Did he stiffen himself in defiance? Did he say, "Other men do the same, I am the king, who are you to say me nay?" Did he crush

Nathan like a worm? Broken and crushed, he falls with a cry that sobs like the moan of the sea. Every word of that cry drips with heart-blood. "Have mercy upon me, oh God. My sin is ever before me. Cast me not away from thy presence. A broken and a contrite heart, oh God." If there is anything greater than David's sin it is his contrition and confession. There is nothing like it to be found written of any other man. "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." God heard his prayer and washed him white, but did not whitewash him.

David fell into the mud, but he did not wallow in the mud. To fall is bad, to stay down is worse. David made a grievous mistake, but he did all in his power to right it. To refuse to right a wrong is the great sin. To sin was not David's native bent. In his soul he abhorred evil and cleaved to good. His sin was but the black spot upon the sun. There were eddies in the current, but the general direction of the stream was on, ever on. The road up the mountains is now up and now down, but it ever climbs, and at last it reaches the sunlit summit. David dipped here and there into the bog and the marsh, but his aim was ever high, his purpose ever holy, his desire ever heavenly. In his heart he "hungered and thirsted after righteousness."

His sin was forgiven and his soul was cleansed,

but the sword never departed from his house. His sin leaves its serpentine track to the third and fourth generation. The sin is forgiven, but the consequences remain. The wound is healed, but the scars! The drunkard repents, but his child inherits the appetite. When once the prairie is set on fire sore sorrow does not prevent its laying waste the harvest fields. How hard to undo. Ever after his great sin there is a minor chord in David's song. To all who, like David, have grievously sinned God speaks, "Let the wicked forsake his way and turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." There is hope for the worst. There is a bridge between the sinner and the Saviour; 'tis Calvary.

In spite of critics' sneers, to be right with God was David's chief concern; and the thing that breaks his heart is that against God he had done this great wickedness. In the daytime his heart turned toward God. In the night season his prayer ascended to God. The Lord was to him a shepherd, a friend, a rock, a defense. His eyes were so keen that they saw God everywhere. To him "The heavens declare the glory of God." The keynote of his life, whether reigning in triumph or bowed in grief, whether walking in the paths of purity or alas, slipping into the paths of shame, the keynote of his life was, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee,

O God." He made his boast, not in himself, not in his crown, but in the Lord. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." David was a king in his humility, a king in his exaltation. He was every inch a king. "Tender, yet mighty; brave, yet yielding; magnanimous, yet unrelenting; exultant, yet sad."

In nothing is his kingliness more seen than in his bearing toward others. Knowing that he is to take the throne after Saul, hunted by the king with murderous intent, a price upon his head, yet when, again and again, Saul falls into his hands, David not only spares his life, but protects him against those who would have struck him down. Even Saul weeps and declares, "Thou hast rewarded me good for evil." David teaches the kingly lesson, "The best thing to give an enemy is forgiveness."

When, at last, Saul is dead, instead of a note of triumph, a pæan of victory, there broke from him a lamentation which was "a thunderstorm turned to tears." Those who slew the house of Saul and came to David exulting, to receive their reward, found themselves like any other common murderers, sent to the gallows. David reasoned, the man who would do a mean trick for you would do a mean trick to you if he gets the chance; he who would lie for you, would lie to you.

David's affection for Jonathan, his tenderness

toward the club-footed Mephibosheth, his lament over Absalom, his sorrow over his wayward sons, his grief over the folly of his enemies, his forgiveness of Shimei, the kiss he planted on the cheek of old Barzillai, reveal a heart as kingly and as tender as ever beat in the bosom of man.

David was truly great, for he was truly good. The burden of his life seemed to be not only how to decrease the sum of human misery, but how to increase the sum of human happiness. He never climbed by stepping on the necks of others. But as he climbed he helped others up. Lot looked out for Number One, and wound up in brimstone. Abraham looked out for Number Two, and in the evening of his life God spake of him as He never spake of any other man, "Abraham, my friend." Better far to have God thus speak of us than great possessions have.

*"Is it worth while that we jostle a brother  
Bearing his load on the rough road of life?  
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other  
In blackness of heart—that we war to the knife?  
God pity us all in our pitiful strife."*

David had great wealth, great power, great honour and much trouble. Much trouble is the inheritance of kings. He took no time for recreation or rest. His heart was ever burdened for Israel. He poured out his very life for his coun-

try. At the age when Bismarck, Gladstone and Victoria were full of vigour, his life-fires were burned out.

“The days drew nigh when David should die.” There came creeping over him a home-sickness for heaven. You catch the faint whisper from his lips, “I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness.” He stirs himself from his stupor but long enough to say to his son, Solomon, “My son, show thyself a man.” And then, having conquered “the fever called living,” he had, as was written of the French magistrate, DeBourg, “six feet of earth for his body and the infinite heavens for his soul.” Truthfully can it be said of this son of Jesse, “He hitched his wagon to a star—the star of Bethlehem.”

# X

## GIDEON

*A Man and Three Hundred*

**G**IDEON and three hundred put to utter and terrible rout one hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites. Wesley, that hero of two continents, said, "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but God, hate nothing but sin, know nothing among men but Christ, and I will take the world." When the Master would send out an army to conquer the world, He sent out twelve fishermen. There is a majority of numbers and a majority of quality. The majority of quality is mightier than the majority of numbers.

Leonidas and three hundred Greeks stood against the hordes of Asia, and twenty thousand Persians lay dead at their feet. A little handful under Hooker took the heights of Lookout Mountain. One hundred and twenty Pilgrims stepped from the *Mayflower*, with empires in their brains and the fire of liberty in their blood, and turned Plymouth Rock into the great Republic. Gideon and his little company were only three hundred, but they seemed to the enemy to be three thou-

sand, and they were. Like the little band of Scotchmen that followed the heart of Bruce, Gideon's three hundred had the swing of victory.

Majorities do not win. Majorities do not rule. It's the few that hold the power. The few hold the financial power, the political, social, intellectual, religious. One man often outnumbers the crowd. So did one man Jesop in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Peter in Jerusalem, Paul in Rome. A Beethoven in music, a Raphael in art, a Shakespeare in poetry, a Bacon in philosophy outnumbers ten thousand of the rabble. Broad is the way to destruction, and many find it. Narrow the way to life, and few enter. But the few outnumber the many. A mathematical paradox, a mathematical truth.

For forty years Deborah, a woman, ruled Israel. During that forty years "the land had rest." But no sooner was Deborah carried to her burial than the old story was repeated. "Israel forsook the Lord." The train said, "I can run without the engine." It cut itself loose and ran without the engine. By yon sharp curve it lies, a wreck. The flower said, "I can get along without the sun." It got along without the sun. Its fragrance is dead, its petals withered. The stream said, "I can get along without the fountain." It got along without the fountain, and its track became a gorge of sand. The body gets along without the heart and lies

pulseless, pale, dead. The flock gets along without the shepherd, and is torn and rent of the wolves. The pupil gets along without the teacher, and grows up in ignorance. Israel got along without God. The first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is put first, because it is first. God is first. "The branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine." "I am the vine, ye are the branches."

"Israel forsook the Lord." And the next step follows as naturally as effect follows cause. "Israel was greatly impoverished." She cut off the source of her income and soon her principal was exhausted. She cut off the source of her life, and soon her life forces were burned up. The figure is that of a leaf hanging by a single thread, the juices dried, life gone, yellow, sear, ready to drop. "Israel was greatly impoverished." The Midianites came upon her and snatched the bread from her mouth, the clothes from her back, drove her from her homes, and lo, proud Israel, the children of the highest, the heirs of all things, hiding in the holes of the earth.

Israel ought to have been building and conquering, but instead she was crouching in the dens of beasts. So does sin bring men down. How many who might have been kings and conquerors, but for sin, hide in obscurity and weakness. A man of my acquaintance, the inheritor of greatness, the

blood of heroes pumping through his veins, today, impoverished like Israel, in rags and hunger, hides in the dens of darkness. What a list of "might-have-beens." Sin makes slaves of men.

"And Israel cried unto the Lord." Not because she had sinned, not because she was sorry that she had sinned, but because the Midianites flayed her, and it hurt. Because she walked into the trap and found the teeth sharp. There is no meaner prayer recorded than this prayer of Israel. They cried to God after the manner of criminals. It was a gallows cry, because the rope hurt. An electric chair cry, because the current stung. It was the cry of cowards. Israel had been warned against the fire; but, not heeding, she thrust herself into the flame and then cried because it burned. In spite of entreaties, she made for the vortex, and when it began to suck her down, she begged for help. Israel cried not because of her sin, but because of the pain it brought. And yet, marvellous to believe, God heard that prayer. Verily, it is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed. His compassion is without end.

Israel cried unto the Lord and the Lord raised up a deliverer. One day an unknown man, of an unknown family, was hiding in a cave, shelling out a little corn, trembling for fear the Midianites would fall upon him. An angel appeared unto him and looked upon him, and from that hour he was

changed. Changed as was Stanley when Livingston looked upon him, as was Peter when the Lord looked upon him. There is a look that transfixes, transfigures, transforms.

God found a deliverer for Israel in a cave. Deliverers are found in unlikely places. He finds a deliverer in a tannery, by the rail-pile, along the tow-path, in the Canton cottage. Deliverers are found in unlikely places; keeping the sheep of Jesse, in the wilderness of Midian, in the manger of Bethlehem. The Lord found the deliverer. There is no explanation for Gideon, for Lincoln, for Luther, except God.

"The spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." He is now ready for any fray. The spirit of the Lord came upon Brainerd, Moody, Spurgeon, and they did mightily. The spirit of the Lord is the great equipment men need. That is better than sword or armour. The Lord started Gideon on his work of reform by ordering him to pull down the altar of Baal before his father's house. He had to begin work in his own home. Ancient Jerusalem was kept clean by every man cleaning before his own door. In the early days, London was lit by every man lighting before his own house. The place to begin is at home. Gideon first pulled down the altar of Baal and then built an altar to the Lord. He began by pulling down. Every great building is begun by digging. There must be a

tearing down before there can be a building up, an emptying before there can be a filling.

The day of battle having come, Gideon sounded his trumpet, and 32,000 Israelites rally to go against the 135,000 Midianites. But the Lord said, "The people are too many." When did the Lord ever complain of the people being too few? "If two or three are met together in my name I am in the midst." One with the Lord can chase a thousand. He can "thrash a mountain with a worm." What becomes of Napoleon's "God is on the side of the heaviest battalion?" There is a divine arithmetic that Napoleon wot not of. "Let all that are fearful and afraid return," said the Lord, and 22,000 slunk off home. It beats all how many people leave when you let the cowards go. Lots of men are brave the day after the battle. Lots of men are brave the day before the battle. Not so many are brave the day of the battle.

And the Lord said, "The people are yet too many. Wait, and I will show you what you shall do." When the ten thousand remaining came to a brook, 9,700 threw themselves upon the bank and drank. Three hundred, so eager to fall upon the enemy, but caught a little water in their hands, flung it into their mouths and rushed on. And the Lord said, "By the hand of the three hundred will I deliver Israel." The man that cares more

for a good drink than the battle, you can afford to let go. The three hundred were the few faithful among the faithless. The 9,700 were "more foam than ocean, more sputter than real bravery." They were long on talk but short on fight.

That night the Lord said to Gideon, "Slip up to the camp of the Midianites and see what you hear." As he slipped up one Midianite was telling another of his strange dream, how he had seen a barley-cake roll down the mountainside, knock over a tent, and that tent another, until all the tents were down. "Ah," said the listener, "that is that man Gideon." And Gideon, in the dark, could hear their teeth chatter from fear. And he arose and said, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands." He knew when fear took possession of the Midianites they had lost the battle before it was fought. "Battles are lost and won in the soul."

The three hundred of Gideon, armed each with a torch hid in a pitcher, and a trumpet, surround the camp of the enemy. At a given signal every man was to blow his trumpet, smash his pitcher and fling aloft his torch. The pitchers were of no account except to hide the lights, and they had to be broken before the lights could shine. What a pity to break the pitchers. No doubt they were very beautiful and very expensive. These are days of highly decorated pitchers. The Church

and the world have gone wild over pitchers. It must be highly classic music, highly carved pew, highly oratorical preaching. No matter about the torches, give us beautiful pitchers. Pitchers don't count. It's the torches that count. How many spend themselves over the pitchers, the outside, the trappings, and neglect the light within. So did Absalom, anxious over his hair, neglectful of his heart. So did Dives, spending himself over his outside trappings, while forgetting the things of the soul. So did the man who pulled down his barns and built greater and said, "Soul, take thine ease."

What weapons to go against a 135,000 enemy armed to the teeth—torches and trumpets. What weapons to go against Jericho—horns. What weapons to go against Egypt—a walking-stick. "Not by might nor by power, but my spirit saith the Lord." Othniel, with his spear; Ehud, with his dagger; Shamgar, with his ox-goad; Gideon, with torch and trumpet, won memorable victories because they remembered that the battle was not theirs, but God's. The three hundred men rushed from every side upon the Midianite hosts, shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Slogans have won as many battles as swords. What the shout at Murfreesboro, "We conquer or we die right here," and at New Orleans, "Victory or death," and at Trafalgar, "England

expects every man to do his duty," and at San Juan, "Remember the Maine," and at Verdun, "They shall not pass," did for victory. The shout of Gideon's band struck terror to the heart of the enemy. It was the sword of the Lord first, and then the sword of Gideon. We cannot deliver ourselves. Deliverance is of God. Salvation is from heaven. Redemption is from on high. We need to turn our eyes up in the day of battle. The sword of the Lord first. But also the sword of Gideon. Without Gideon there would have been no victory. He is an illustration of what a man of force on fire can do. There is no greater victory recorded than this of Gideon. Having a will, Gideon found a way. Earnestness always finds an opportunity. Earnestness always finds the sling with which to slay the giant, the jaw-bone with which to rout the Philistines. There is no limit to what one man can do, consumed of earnestness. One man, Garfield, consumed of earnestness, stopped the mob in the streets of New York. One man, Daniel, consumed of earnestness, made all the puppets of Babylon tremble. They fail, and they alone, who are not dead in earnest.

Such a spirit possessed Gideon as possessed that Roman general who, his army filled with terror, about to retreat, flung himself on the ground at the entrance of a narrow path and said, "Men, if you will go back you must go over my body."

In one of the battles of the Republic one soldier chided another with, "Your sword is too short." "Then I'll make it longer by keeping a pace ahead," was the instant retort. That was the manner of man Gideon was. Argo, the great French astronomer, tells us he was about to give up in despair when he chanced to pick up a leaf on which was written, "Go on, sir, go on," and bearing the name of the great D'Alembert. Gideon ever heard a voice from above, saying, "Go on, go on," and a holy fire burned within him, a holy zeal stirred him, and he went on.

Great was the loss of the Midianites, but Gideon lost nothing in the battle, not a man, not a spark of manhood, not a jot of honour, not a tittle of principle. He came out without a stain and without a scar. We are in the fight. May we come out with no moral scars, no stain, no blotch on our lives. May we come out with clean hands and pure hearts. "Take unto you the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day." Gideon fought for his country, but he did not forget his God.

Then the men of Israel came and said unto Gideon, "Rule thou over us." And Gideon said unto them, "I will not rule over you, the Lord shall rule over you." That great refusal reveals his real greatness, a greatness greater than that of Cæsar, Napoleon, or Cromwell. We read, "Gideon

resembled a king." He refused to be made a king, but he was a king. There are many kings, some crowned and some uncrowned. The crown is in the man rather than upon him. If the crown is only upon him, a puff of wind may blow it off or some anarchist may suddenly dash it down. When all eyes are on Gideon, all voices cry, "Be thou our king," he points them to God. May we all be so empty of self and so full of God.

Gideon was a great soldier, a great judge, but a greater man. We need great leaders, great statesmen, great teachers, but far more, great men. Gideon was one of the men who was always greater than the occasion. For forty years Gideon judged Israel in righteousness, and he lived so that he could say at the close of his life as did Alfred the Great, "So long as I have lived, I have striven to live worthily."

"And Gideon died in a good old age." Those words are written of only one other—Abraham, "the friend of God." Of whom it can be written, "a friend of God," of him it can be written, "He died in a good old age." To be a friend of God is the important thing.

## XI

### AHAB

#### *A Moral Coward*

FOR the weak man who is led astray, for the ignorant man who wanders astray, there ever is pity. But, for the man of position and power, who knows the right but does the wrong, from every man worthy of the name, there can be but everlasting contempt.

Nine hundred and nineteen years before the star shone over the Bethlehem manger that greatest of moral cowards, Ahab, came to Israel's throne. He was a Judas Iscariot, Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr in one. Like Judas, he was a traitor to his God. Like Arnold, a traitor to his country. Like Burr, a traitor to his own best interests. As the king of God's chosen people, he was surrounded by God's prophets and priests. He knew the right, but he found it easier and more popular to do the wrong.

Ahab was like Redwald, king of East Anglica, who had two altars, one for God and one for Woden, the Saxon idol. His shield bore the image of God on one side and Satan on the other, with

*“Paratus ad utrum”* underneath, “ready for either.” A European statesman once said, “I never allow my religion to interfere with my politics or business.” Ahab was such a statesman. There are men who would disgrace the worst walks of life, and of such, Ahab was chief.

Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom was split in two. Ten tribes taking the name of Israel and two, Judah. Jereboam was the first king of Israel. In the sixty-six years from Jereboam to Ahab there were six kings; three assassinations and three usurpations. Omri, the father of Ahab, excelled all the kings who preceded him in doing evil. He built the city of Samaria on a high hill, strongly fortified it and made it his capital. He made an alliance with the king of Tyre and strengthened it by marrying his son, Ahab, to Jezebel, the daughter of the Tyrian king.

Jezebel was as fascinating as Cleopatra, as powerful as Catherine de Medici, as daring as Lady Macbeth, as bewitching as Clytemnestra, as dashing as Mme. Pompadour, and as wicked as all five combined. She was as cold as steel, as cruel as death, as calculating as Satan. A dagger was always hid behind her enchanting smile. Anthony was not more the slave of Cleopatra than was Ahab of this daring, wicked woman. Though king, he dared not say her nay. She gathered the heads of Jehovah’s prophets in baskets. She fed

and feted at her own table eight hundred and fifty priests of Baal. At her imperious command, Ahab erected two great temples to this god. She is an ever-living illustration that the mightiest thing in this world for evil is a great woman that is bad.

History is not so much the story of the deeds of men as of the doings of women, good and bad. Woman has ever been the power behind the throne and the home, for weal or woe. Many a man with a bad father has risen to heights of greatness and goodness. But, name a man with a bad mother or a bad wife, who has left footprints immortal behind.

Ahab was knowingly and wilfully wicked, therefore inexcusable. God sent him many a warning, but he heeded not. Love would not stop him, so the Lord tried the lash. Elijah stood before Ahab and said, "As I live, saith the Lord, there shall be no dew or rain these years." When this awful doom was pronounced, Israel had a population as dense as Belgium. She was a land of fortified cities and mighty armies. She flowed with milk and honey. Her annual rainfall was sixty inches. Her climate, semi-tropical, her soil, porous, everything depended upon her rain.

According to the word of the prophet, for three years and a half not a drop of moisture fell. The sun rolled through the heavens like a mighty ball

of fire. The dust in the highways became like red-hot ashes. The sky looked like a sheet of flame. Tongues of fire licked up brook and river. Not a leaf stirred, not a bird chirped, not a bee hummed, not a flower bloomed, for they were all dead. Palestine became a great sepulchre. The fields were covered with bleaching skeletons. Physical punishment for moral wrong. God but adapted His method to our manner. A clerk commits a crime and suffers bodily incarceration. The official betrays his trust and is turned out penniless to beg. Physical punishment for moral wrong.

One day Ahab goes out hunting, hoping to find a little grass and water for the royal mules. He goes seeking for grass, not for God. He is more concerned about the mules than about the people or about his sins. Ahab, on his vain search for water, shows us how powerless man is. God turned the key in the sky and it could not rain. God holdeth the sea in the hollow of His hand. If He but close His hand, drought devours the land. He touches the hills of Martinique and they smoke. He but speaks, and our breath is gone. Ahab made every effort to find water, except the one effective effort, repentance, confession, forsaking his sins. As the king goes trudging through the hissing heat, suddenly, for the first time in four years, he stands face to face with the prophet,

Elijah. There breaks from the king's lips, "Art thou here, oh, troubler of Israel?" Elijah promptly and properly replied, "I have not troubled Israel." Is the doctor to be blamed for the disease which our dissipation brings, and against which he warned us? Is the fog-horn to be blamed for the ship's deliberately pushing on to the rocks, in spite of its warning voice? Is the flagman to be blamed for the train's rushing to wreckage in the face of his swinging red lantern?

"I have not troubled Israel," thundered the prophet, "but thou and thy father's house." Then he commanded the king to assemble Israel and the priests of Baal upon the heights of Carmel, which towered 1,600 feet above the Mediterranean. The prophet commanded and the king dared not disobey. For years Israel had been worshiping Baal, the god of fire. Elijah comes down to their plane and brings the challenge, "The God that answers by fire, let him be God." All the day long the priests of Baal cry aloud to their god. They cut and gnash themselves in frenzy. No fire falls. As the sun is setting, in the awful hush of dying day, Elijah lifts his hands toward heaven, his heart toward God, and there is a rush of flame from on high that licks up offering and altar.

As the people cry, "The Lord He is God," for

a moment Ahab stirs as though he would join the shout. But it was only for a moment. He had played the moral coward so long that his moral sense was atrophied. The mercury was frozen in the bulb. The spring had lost its power to rebound. He had sinned so wilfully, so deliberately, so knowingly, so wickedly and so long, that when he would do good he could not. It is impossible for the buzzard to become a bee, for the carrion hawk to become a kingly eagle.

A great Russian violinist was handed a violin with the remark, "That violin is two hundred years old. It must be very valuable." "Not necessarily so," said the musician, "because if a violin has been used to play a low class of music on, it comes to vibrate only to that class and will not respond to music of a high order." Then, pulling the bow a few times across the strings, he shook his head and said, "That violin is not valuable, it has been used too long to play inferior music." It is an awful thing when a man lets himself respond and vibrate so long to things low and base that he loses the power to respond to things high and holy.

One evening a myriad of insects were flying about an arc light. They would dash into the electric flame and then by the hundred fall to the ground. Upon examining the wriggling mass on the ground it was discovered that they had so

scorched their wings in the fearful fire they no longer could fly. A parable indeed of the way men scorch their souls and lose the power to rise. The trouble with all Ahabs is, they forget that the way of sin is down, and that soon the descent becomes too steep for recovery. Some one has said, "The trouble with those who go to the bad is, they fail to remember there are no return tickets." Let him who is tempted to play loose with his moral self remember Ahab.

Twenty-five miles north of Samaria, on the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, Ahab built him a summer home—Jezreel, a palace of ivory, with parks and grounds and drives of beauty. Here he gave himself over to luxurious dissipation. Hard by these kingly grounds, Naboth, a humble citizen, owned a little vineyard, the inheritance of his fathers. Ahab spied Naboth's little plot of ground with its bubbling springs and its grapes, a larger and more luscious than his, and said, "I must have that at any cost. If I can only get that my happiness will be complete." He thought that happiness consisteth in the things one possesseth. He forgot that happiness is not in things, but in us. The queen of Egypt had her one drink that cost one hundred and fourteen million dollars, but she found not happiness. Tiberius Cæsar left behind him one hundred and eighteen billion dollars and every proof that he lived and died not happy.

Crœsus, whose very name means wealth, murmured, dying, "*Infelicissimus*," most unhappy.

Happiness is not from without, but within. Herod in the palace, Nero on the throne, Bonaparte waving a sceptre over a continent, were not happy. If there be much goods laid up for the body, then do men imagine they will be happy. And the soul? Can it be satisfied with roasts and robes? Richard Le Gallienne says, "I believe that most men work on in the hope that some day they will have so securely provided for the body that they cannot then fail to be happy." Such men are Ahabs, who imagine happiness will come from the possession of another vineyard; Achans, who imagine that happiness is to be found in the heart of some golden wedge; Judas', who imagine that happiness is hid in a bag of thirty pieces of silver. As easy to satisfy the thirst with the salt water of the sea as to satisfy the soul with vineyards. Naboth, true to his land and her laws, his religion and his God, refused to part with his inheritance.

The king is now stretched out on his ivory bed, with his face to the wall. Has the army been defeated? Have the people revolted? Has the king lost his throne? No. There is a "little garden of herbs" he can't have, and so he turns his face to the wall and pouts like a spoiled child. He is out of tune and every breeze produces a discord. Alexander the Great, because he could

not get an ivy to grow in his garden, declared that all the kingdom was nothing without an ivy. 'Tis nothing that Ahab is king and the whole realm is his. Naboth's little vineyard haunts him, and because he cannot have that, the crown loses its lustre and the throne its power. There is a fly in the ointment.

When ever did a Jezebel fail to find a way or make one? "Art not thou the king? Infirm of purpose, give me the royal seal." This God-hating, God-defying, God-cursing woman, when it suits her irreligious purpose, can be very religious. Court is assembled. Two witnesses give false oath that they heard Naboth blaspheme the king and Jehovah. Jezebel raises her hands in religious horror. Naboth, stunned and dazed, turns to the faces of his neighbours for help and pity, only to meet with looks cold and daggered. In vain he protests his innocence. In vain he points to his past life. He hears the cry of his wife and children and begs for one minute for a last farewell. The queen stops her ears to his cry and he is hurried out to the place of execution. The stones rain upon him, and—the dogs lick up his blood.

Naboth was tried, convicted, sentenced, executed by legal form. Oh, law! What crimes have been committed in thy name. The Inquisition was legal. Slavery was legal. The saloon

was legal. Cities are legally robbed by legally elected officials. Such legality cries to heaven for vengeance. Nabothen lies stoned and dead, and who cares? God cares. There is a day of reckoning coming. There is a judgment time. Voices from Nabothen's vineyard cry out to God. "In the silent midnight watches" they cry out.

"Arise," said the queen, "go down and take possession of the vineyard, that man Nabothen is dead." Ahab but crosses the vineyard with the consoling thought that dead men cannot tell tales, when—is it a ghost? No. As Pilate had to look into the eyes of Christ, so once more and for the last time, Ahab looked into the face of the prophet. "Hast thou found me, oh, my enemy?" Elijah was the best friend Ahab ever had, but his cowardice had turned the telescope upside down, and Elijah seems to him an enemy. The broken bone feels that the doctor's knife is its enemy. The thief shrinks from the detective's lantern. Wrong cannot face right with steady gaze. Treachery cannot look into the eyes of truth.

Elijah and Ahab met and there fell from the prophet's lips the bitterest doom that was ever pronounced against man. From that hour, as was said of Napoleon the Little, Ahab was "discrowned and banished, the object of every hard heart's scorn." I saw a horse with heels cut and bleeding. He had kicked the whiffle-tree into

splinters, and he found kicking was bad business. Ahab found it was hard to kick against the pricks. Ahab got the vineyard, but the dogs got Ahab.

“Ahab sold himself to work evil.” That every man has his price, was true of Ahab. A man sold himself to evil, and gave ten cents to bind the bargain. Ten cents? He gave his senses into inactivity, his intellect into stupidity, his conscience into insensibility, his character into bankruptcy. Sin is suicidal. Brutality bruises itself. Prize fighters die young. Gluttons and wine-bibbers burn out their own vitals. Hate hurts worse the man who nurses it. Selfishness robs the soul. “Ahab sold himself to evil,” and received what? Doom, death, dogs. Cain sold himself to evil and received eternal fear. Gehazi sold himself to evil and received loathsome leprosy. Martha Browning, a young woman of but twenty-four, committed a murder in London for a five-pound bank-note. She took the note to the bank and found it was counterfeit. Counterfeit is the coin of the devil’s realm.

“Where the dogs licked up Naboth’s blood shall dogs lick up thy blood,” was the sentence pronounced upon Ahab. That sentence ever followed him by day and by night. Going to war, some years after, he disguised himself so that he might not be slain. But a “chance” arrow slew him.

The Spanish Armada sailed to civilization's destruction, but a "chance" storm broke it and scattered it like chips upon the sea. Two hundred and fifty guns of the French went against one hundred and sixty guns of the English at Waterloo. But the one hundred and sixty guns of the English "chanced" to tear to pieces the two hundred and fifty guns of the French. On the second day at Gettysburg, when Ewell heard Longstreet attacking the Union left, he, Ewell, was to attack the Union right. But, according to Ewell's testimony afterward, the wind "chanced" to blow in such a peculiar way he could not hear Longstreet's bombardment, and Lee was defeated at Gettysburg. A "chance" wind did it. God and "chance" work mighty miracles.

A "chance" arrow slew Ahab. What a little thing it takes to kill a man! Anacreon, the poet, was choked to death by a grape-seed. Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, was killed by a poisoned toothpick. Fabius, the Roman prætor, was strangled to death by a hair. What a little thing it takes to kill a man! We hang by a single thread and how quickly the thread snaps. A young prince was sad of countenance. "Why are you sad?" asked his tutor. "Because I have been thinking about death." "Such thoughts should be far from one so young as thou art." "Ah! But I have been to the cemetery and

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*A MORAL COWARD*

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measured the graves, and found many are shorter than I." It takes but a "chance" arrow to kill. Who is safe?

It was twenty years before the sentence pronounced upon Ahab and Jezebel was executed. But it was executed. God never forgets. "Let the earth rejoice." His promises and His warnings stand sure. "He will bring every work into the judgment with every secret thing." We have to settle with God by and by. Some men's sins go before them to the judgment, as did the publican's. Some men's sins follow after them, as did Ahab's. Ahab was the king of God's people, but he missed heaven.

## XII

### ELIJAH

*The Man of Iron*

ELIJAH the Tishbite" had sinews of steel and muscles of iron. At a time when the followers of Jehovah were hiding, in fear of their lives, God sent this shaggy-headed, fierce-looking, powerfully-framed prophet to thunder in the ears of the wicked king, Ahab. Elijah was an earlier edition of John the Baptist. He was rough in exterior, rude in manners, abrupt in speech. He appeared as suddenly before the king as though he had dropped down from the sky. He spoke with a voice of thunder and gestured with a sword. There was the roar of the mountain lion in his voice and the shudder of the earthquake in his tread.

Elijah was from the mountain country of Gilead; a region stern, bleak, rocky, majestic, awful. As the region, so the man. The might of the mountain entered into his muscle. Fighting the fierce mountain storm gave him strength to fight the fiercer Jezebel. Struggle made him strong.

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## THE MAN OF IRON

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A gentleman wished to add an emperor moth to his collection. He obtained a cocoon and hung it in his house during the winter. In the spring he noticed the moth was trying to get out. The hole was so small and the moth seemed to struggle so hopelessly against the tough fibre that he clipped the hole larger with his scissors. The moth got out. It was a fine, large, emperor moth, but it never flew. The gentleman afterward learned that the hard struggle was necessary to force the juices of the body into the moth's wings. Saving it from the struggle robbed it of its strength. Struggle was its salvation.

The soft, balmy breezes of the south tend to flabby muscle. The force and fury of the north wind make for might. The Swiss is hardy, the Italian effeminate. The Highlander is iron-muscled. The Parisian, soft. A pound of feathers is as heavy as a pound of lead, but they do not kill as quickly. The pressure put upon the lead puts power within it. Like that son of Jacob, Elijah was "laid in iron and the iron entered his soul."

The prophet stood before the king with the word, "As the Lord liveth there shall be no rain these years." And then, obedient to orders, he hides in the deep gorge, six hundred feet deep, of the brook Cherith, where the divine-sent ravens feed him.

Some doubt this story—this part of the story. I have stood in the bottom of that very ravine. I have seen ravens bring food to their young nested amid the crevices of that ravine. Why should it therefore be thought a thing incredible that God would send the ravens to feed Elijah?

*"The wonder is often renewed  
And many can say to His praise,  
He sends them by ravens their food."*

With the blue sky for a roof, the great rocks for walls, stars for candles, moss for a bed, and no companions but the hoarse croaking ravens, for a long year and a half Elijah does the hardest thing to do—sits and waits. The hardest thing to believe is that "they also serve who only stand and wait." Have you ever been to Cherith, the place of isolation and separation? Paul had his Cherith in Arabia, John in Patmos, the Master in the wilderness. Cherith is the place that tests.

When, after eighteen months, the brook ceased its song, again under marching orders, the prophet trudged across the now drouth-scorched land, to a heathen city, Zarephath. One evening, as the great fiery sun was sinking behind the hills, unkept, unwashed, untrimmed, Elijah enters the outskirts of the town. A widow is gathering a few chips with which to cook the last bit of food in her house for her son, and then, like their neigh-

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## THE MAN OF IRON

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bours, they will die. Elijah says, "Bring me, I pray thee, a little food to eat." "I have nothing save a handful of meal and a little oil which I am just preparing for my starving child." "Bring me something to eat, and fear not." And, with a rare faith, the widow cooked for the prophet her last bit of meal. And lo, for all the two and a half years of drouth and death, there was plenty and to spare in the meal-barrel and the oil-cruse.

No matter how small our resources, we can do something for God and others. If the widow had felt that she was too poor to give, she would have eaten her last bit of food and died. Not what we keep, but what we give away, enriches us. Who believes that it is more blessed to give than to receive? But it is. Whosoever shall give a cup of water in the name of the Lord will not lose his reward.

*"Is thy cruse of comfort failing?  
Rise and share it with another  
And through all the years of famine  
It shall serve thee and thy brother.  
Love divine will fill thy storehouse,  
Or thy handful still renew  
Scanty fare for one will often  
Make a royal feast for two.  
For the heart grows rich in giving,  
All its wealth is living gain;  
Seeds which mildew in the garner,  
Scattered, fill with gold the plain."*

It was when the widow was preparing her last meal that help came. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

Standing at last upon Mt. Carmel, facing the eight hundred and fifty furious priests of Baal, the supposed god of fire, Elijah brings the challenge, "The God that answers by fire, let Him be God." And God proved Himself the God of fire. He is the God of fire. He met Moses in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush. He led Israel out by a pillar of flame. He came in tongues of fire at Pentecost. And at the last "The Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire." Jehovah is the God of fire, and He sends prophets of fire. There is a tradition that at his birth Elijah was wrapped in swaddling bands of fire and was fed with flames. And we know that at the end he was taken up in a chariot of fire. We are told that John the Baptist was a "a burning and a shining light."

We shine enough, shine with genius, learning, culture, but who burns with a consuming fire? Of whom is it now written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"? Our great need is a backward movement to the Pentecost of fire.

As the fire comes down and the people cry, "The Lord he is God," Elijah falls upon his face and prays for rain. He sends a lad upon the mountain-

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## THE MAN OF IRON

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top to see if there be any signs. There was not so much as a cloud-speck.

*“And thus twice, thrice, seven times they strive,  
With faith that cannot fail;  
One watching on the mount above,  
One wrestling in the vale.”*

Delays are not denials. As the lad returned the seventh time he said, “There is a cloud as big as a man’s hand.” And soon the warm rain came in torrents, flooding field and filling cistern. The cattle lay down and let the welcome showers beat upon them. The mountains clapped their hands in very joy. The brooks took on a new song.

Elijah was a man of like passions as ourselves, but he prayed, and there was no rain for three years and a half. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave forth rain. “There shall be showers of blessing” in America, India, the world, when all the Elijahs remember, “The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.” While Elijah prayed, Ahab went up to eat. Elijah prays and Ahab feasts. Crises show what men are.

When Ahab reports to Jezebel that the eight hundred and fifty priests have been slain by Elijah, she is as furious as a tigress robbed of her whelps. The warm showers soften the field, but do not soften her stony heart. She vows by everything

that she will have Elijah's head "by tomorrow this time." Why did she wait till tomorrow? Why? "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." By tomorrow this time Elijah will be far beyond the reach of her fury. The prophet who stood fearless before the eight hundred and fifty priests of Baal and the armies of the king, now, under the threat of Jezebel, flees. The last man one would have expected to run, takes to his heels. "The best of men are but men at best." Heroes are not always heroic. Giants are not always strong. When we are strong, then are we weak.

Elijah failed at his strongest point—courage. This has always been true of men. Moses, the man of meekness, flies into a temper. John, the apostle of love, in a rage calls for fire from heaven. Peter, courageous, turns coward. The old castle at Edinburg was never captured but once. And that was on the side so strong no guard was placed there. It's the strong side that needs guarding. Elijah lost his courage—once. To lose courage once does not make a man a coward, any more than being brave once makes a man heroic. One prayer does not make a saint. One slip does not make a sinner. Now the path may lead up, now down, but the general direction determines the destiny. Elijah fainted and failed after the battle. Many faint before the battle.

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## THE MAN OF IRON

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All dust-covered from his race over the sand, perspiration streaming from every pore, exhausted, Elijah flings himself under a juniper tree and wishes to die. His trouble was more physical than spiritual. His terrific contest on Carmel left him exhausted and limp. Reaction equals action. When the tension is removed the bent bow flies back. The valley is as deep as the mountain is high. It is now ebb tide with Elijah. The pendulum swings as far backward as it does forward. Something was wrong with Elijah's nerves, not with his heart. He needed rest and sleep. "What do you believe?" asked one man of another. "The wind is east today, and I never say what I believe when the wind is east." The wind was east with Elijah.

The prophet said he was alone, and—he was alone. There were at this time seven thousand secret disciples in Israel. When Elijah slew the prophets of Baal, if these seven thousand had rallied to his support—but they didn't. When Jacob Riis sent up his soul-cry for help for the slums of New York, in that book, *How the Other Half Lives*, a few days after he found upon his desk a calling-card, and written across it this sentence, "I have read your book and have come to help." The card bore the name of Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Riis testifies that that sentence, signed by that name, brought him inspiration that brought suc-

cess. Many an Elijah is driven to the wilderness of despair because there is no one to speak a word of encouragement. How sorely men need the thing we call encouragement.

Elijah lost heart, and losing heart, he lost his power. The man who keeps heart doubles his strength. Elijah had been looking up, but now, like Peter on the boisterous waves, he took his eyes off of God and, looking down upon the wild waters, terror seizes him. "He sat down under a juniper tree." He ought not to have sat down. If he had kept going he would have come off victorious. Too many sit down under juniper trees. The Lord's word is, "Up, be strong, quit you like men."

"Let me die," he prays. In an hour of dark discouragement Moses prayed the same prayer. What a blessed thing the Lord answers some of our prayers with a "No." If Elijah's prayer had been answered with a "Yes," there would have been a lone grave in the sand of the desert, and nothing more. There would have been no chariot and horses of fire carrying him to heaven. And a thousand years later, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter could not have said, "Let us build here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah." For there would have been no Elijah there. 'Tis blessed that God does not give us all we ask, as we ask.

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## THE MAN OF IRON

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*"Leave God to order all thy ways  
And trust in Him whate'er betide,  
Thou'l find Him in the evil days  
Thine all-sufficient strength and guide.  
Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
Builds on the rock that naught can move."*

Elijah lies, exhausted and asleep, on the sand, under the open sky. The Lord stoops over him. With a lash? With His love. Never was a mother more gentle with a sick child. "Like as a father pitieith his child, so the Lord pitieith" this runaway prophet. Verily the Lord does not love us because we are good, but to make us good. Elijah opens his eyes and sees food prepared before him. He eats, but rushes on and hides himself in the mountains. Standing in the cleft of a great rock, he hears a voice, "What dost thou here, Elijah?" Life is for doing. A prophet's life is for noble doing, and Elijah is doing nothing but moaning.

While Elijah stood and wondered, there passed by a great fire, and then a mighty wind, and after that a terrible earthquake. That was what Elijah wanted—a fire to burn, a wind to tear, and an earthquake to upheave. But, to his surprise, God was not in the fire or the wind or the earthquake. Then spake a still small voice, and—God was in the voice. And Elijah learned the lesson hard to learn, not by earthquake nor by storm, but by

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## *MEN WHO MADE AND MARRED HISTORY*

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my spirit, saith the Lord. Having learned the needed lesson, Elijah returns to his country and to his toil.

The hour came when God would take the weather-worn old man, with his long, flowing, grey locks and his sheepskin coat, home. Elijah came in a whirlwind, lived in a whirlwind, and he will go out in a whirlwind. As he walked amid the wild rocks and the rugged crags, a chariot and horses of fire swept down the sky and swept the old hero up.

If your eye but follow that chariot of flame, you'll see that life does not end here. There is life beyond. Elijah went up on wings of lightning. We will go up on wings of light. Death is but passing through a door, but crossing a bridge. It's "absent from the body and present with the Lord." What birth does for this world, death does for the next. Death but lets us sweep through the gates into the city. Christmas Evans, the great Welch preacher, dying, looked up, smiled, waved his hand and said, "Drive on, ye chariots of Israel, drive on." Elijah is gone. God is here.

## XIII

### CHRIST

#### *The Man Pre-eminent*

**T**HREE have been many men eminent. There has been but One pre-eminent. Edward Everett Hale says, "Personality is the greatest thing in the world." It is. And He is the great personality. Was it Renan who said, "Whatever the surprises of the future may be, the character of Jesus Christ will never be surpassed"? Men have ever hunted for heroes without spot or blemish. Such a hero has been found walking up and down Galilee.

From that first man who was planted in a garden, to the last man to plant a garden, in all the millenniums, there has not been but one man of whom it could be written, "No fault in him." Sin has blackened and scarred each individual man from the beginning to now. Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, David committed murder, Solomon went after strange gods, Elijah turned coward, Peter cursed. Alone, of all the race, Jesus of Nazareth grew up before men without sin's mark or mar. Well has one exclaimed, "It would take

a Christ to make a Christ." However high you climb, He is still above you. "His name is above every name."

*"Jesus, the name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly."*

This man of Galilee is the man pre-eminent.

He is pre-eminent in nature. Are you a student of the rocks? Then, as Miller says, "Your study will lead you to the Rock of Ages." Are you a student of the flowers? Then, as Gray says, "You can't help finding the Rose of Sharon." Are you an astronomer? Herschel says, "He who watches the stars cannot miss finding the Star of Bethlehem." Are you a zoologist? Agassiz tells us, "All roads through zoology lead to the Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

Browning says, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every bush afire with God." He is pre-eminent in nature and over nature. Beneath His feet the liquid waters became as stone. He but spake, and ruby wine sparkled in the water-casks. From Olivet's sunny top, in spite of gravity's tugging at His skirts, He winged Himself to the skies. When Ulysses returned from his twenty years of war to his home in Ithaca, his family and friends did not know him. Even his wife thought him an

impostor. On a sudden, calling for a bow which he had made years before which no one but himself could bend, he seized it and bent it until the bow-string touched his ear, as easily as you would bend a sprig from a willow tree. Instantly his friends cried, "It is Ulysses." Christ took hold of the stubborn laws of nature and bent them at His will.

He is pre-eminent in creation. Through telescope and test-tube we read, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and in the earth, things visible and invisible; and in him all things consist." "Through him also the worlds were made." This world is but His thought. As has been said, the mountains are His majestic thoughts, the stars His brilliant thoughts, the flowers His beautiful thoughts. He pervades all nature. The heavens declare His glory and the firmament shows His handiwork.

He is pre-eminent in history. History is His story. Not even a Gibbon or Hume could write a history and leave Christ out. As easy to write an astronomy and leave the sun out, or a geology and leave the rocks out, or a botany and leave the flowers out. We call Herodotus the father of history. Christ is the father of history. We do not read, "In the beginning was Herodotus," but

“In the beginning was the Word.” His life was not bounded on one side by a manger and on the other by a cross. His life was bounded by the boundless circle of the eternal. It reached from everlasting to everlasting. With His pierced hands He broke time into two pieces—B. C.—A. D. All history before Him converged toward Him. All history since Him diverged from Him. He is the centre around which all events revolve.

The names Thucydides, Xenophon, Cæsar, the world’s historians, are becoming more and more mere specks in the far distance. The name Christ is more and more filling all times and all climes. His hand has hold of the helms of state. His spirit is filling the halls of legislation and pervading the councils of men. Everything is tending toward that better time when the battle-flags will be furled and the war-drum will cease to beat, and the kingdoms of this world will be the kingdoms of peace—His kingdoms.

*“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth His successive journeys run.”*

He is pre-eminent in art. The great painters of the world are Christian painters. The great pictures of the world are Christian pictures. What is art without Raphael, Angelo, da Vinci, Titian, Rubens, Durer? And their greatest paintings are “The Annunciation,” “The Transfiguration,”

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## THE MAN PRE-EMINENT

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“The Last Supper,” “The Crucifixion,” “The Resurrection,” “The Ascension.” Christ the centre of each and all. Take Christ out of the art galleries and there is left bare walls and empty pedestals. He is the background of every art gallery and the hidden image of every immortal marble.

He is pre-eminent in music. Over His manger-cradle, the angels broke out in mighty song. When the stars first sang together, 'twas of Him they sang. The song that fills all heaven is the song of the Lamb. Musicians tell us that in every musical composition there is a diapason, a unity note. He is the unity note of the world's music. The immortal compositions are Handel's “Messiah,” Haydn's “Creation,” Beethoven's “Mount of Olivet,” Bach's “Ascension,” Spohr's “Last Judgment.” Handel was a failure as a musical composer until he linked his name with the name of Christ.

We who have listened to the “Hallelujah Chorus” of the Messiah and have had our hearts wrung with the plaintive solo, “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” can easily believe that Handel wrote it on his knees, that his tears mingled with the ink and that ever and again he saw the heavens open. When Handel linked his name with Christ he found himself linked with immortality. Long

after Alexander the Great, Gustavus Adolphus, Napoleon Bonaparte are all but forgotten, Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," Toplady's "Rock of Ages," Perronet's "Coronation," Adams' "Nearer, My God, to Thee," will ring around the world and sing in the hearts of the millions. He is the keynote of the music that lives.

He is pre-eminent in literature. More than sixty thousand different volumes have been written of Him. All volumes that live are centred about Him. Take out of the libraries the books inspired by His life and words and works, and you have left dust-covered shelves. Spencer's *Faerie Queene* is but the Christian knight of the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Pope's *Messiah* is but a pen-picture of the Prince of Peace. Cowper's *Task* found its inspiration and imagery in the Bethlehem manger. If He had never died, Bryant's *Thanatopsis* would never have lived. If He had never risen Wordsworth's *Ode of Immortality* would never have been sung. Without Him, Shakespeare's conception of Ophelia and Desdemona and other women would have been impossible. He who spake as never man spake, His is the voice that speaks in the literature of the world.

He is pre-eminent in language. Over His cross was written His title in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

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## *THE MAN PRE-EMINENT*

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Hebrew, the language of religion. Greek, the language of art, Latin, the language of law. Prophetic that religion would crown Him Lord of all, that art would lay its tribute at His feet, that law would acknowledge Him Lord. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—the languages of the then world. Prophetic more, that He would possess all tongues and all tongues would confess Him.

His story is told today in more than eight hundred languages and dialects of the world. And with the telling of that story has come to the peoples of the earth a new tongue. The Algonquin Indians had no word in their language for love until they heard the story of Him who so loved them that He bought them with His love. From the manger and the cross has streamed a new light and meaning into the world's language. Take Christ out of the world and you cut your dictionary into shreds.

He is pre-eminent in the Bible. Mrs. Phelps says, "The Bible is the frame in which Christ is the picture." Another says, "The Bible is the story of which Christ is the theme." Still another, "The Bible is the body of which Christ is the heart." The Pentateuch points to the Shiloh, the Rest Giver. He is the Rest Giver. Job's song is of the Redeemer. He is the Redeemer. David lifts his eye to the Bright and Morning Star. There has never been but one Bright and Morning

Star. Matthew's story is of One whose name is called Jesus. That's His name. John flashes before us, "The light of the world." He is the light of the world.

In the sixty-six books of the Bible He is given two hundred and forty-eight different names. It took God and some forty different men fifteen hundred years to produce the Bible. It was written in prisons and in palaces, by princes and by peasants, but wherever written, and by whomever written, all told but one story, the story of the man pre-eminent.

He is pre-eminent in redemption. In spite of all the talk, creeds are good things, churches are good things. But Christ is better. We do not read, "Come unto a creed, all ye burdened," or "Come unto a church, all ye heavy laden." But Christ said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The need of the churches and of the creeds is Christ. That is the need of the world. Lincoln's name stands for patriotism, Bacon's for philosophy, Milton's for poetry, Stuart's for royalty. His name stands for redemption. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save the people."

Arabia had its Mohammed, Persia its Zoroaster, India its Buddha, China its Confucius: but the world has never had but one Saviour. Other so-called saviours have said to men, "You're a sin-

ner.” Christ says, “ You’re a sinner and I can save you.”

A little girl fell down a well. Laying hold of the projecting stones and thrusting her feet in the crevices, she tried to climb out; only to slip and fall. Again and again she tried and failed. At last, when in despair, some one chanced to look down the well and, lowering the bucket, she stepped into it and was soon safe at the top. There is but one way under heaven, given among men, whereby we can get out of the dark depths of sin. He is that way.

*“ Jesus the sinner’s fetters breaks,  
And bruises Satan’s head;  
Power into strengthless souls He speaks,  
And life into the dead.”*

“ By whom ye have redemption.”

He is pre-eminent over death. Confucius said, “ I have taught men how to live.” Christ taught men how to die. Montaigne says, “ He who teaches men how to die, teaches them how to live.” Of all the sons of men, He alone broke through the coffin, making two openings to the grave—out as well as in. “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” “ I am the resurrection and the life.”

Sarah, the wife of Charles Wesley, when dying, looked up into heaven and cried, “ Open the gates, open the gates.” His finger lifted the latch, and

she entered in through the gates. Through faith in His omnipotent name, a sweet singer, dying, was able to sing,

*“Rocks and storms I'll fear no more,  
Safe on that eternal shore.  
Drop the anchor—furl the sail,  
I am safe within the veil.”*

He proves Himself the man pre-eminent because He is everything to everybody. Leading to a certain city, there is a bridge. In the parapets leading to the bridge are twelve statues of Christ. One represents Him as the shepherd, another as the sower, another, the carpenter, another, the physician, and so on, the twelve. As the shepherds come from the hillsides with their flocks, passing into the city, they pause before Christ the shepherd. As the peasants come with their baskets to the markets, they pray before Christ the sower. As the artisans with saw and plane hasten to their workshops, they stop a moment and worship Christ the carpenter. As the sick and suffering hobble on canes and crutches out into the sunshine, drawing near, they pause and pour out their sick souls to Christ the great physician. Each finds Him all sufficient. He is everything to everybody.

At the end of the Franco-Prussian war the German army marched back to Berlin, and, entering the city between great choired hosts singing,

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## THE MAN PRE-EMINENT

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“Lift up your heads, oh, ye gates,” the army marched straight to the statue of Frederick the Great and flung their trophies at his feet. I beseech you by all that is high and holy, bring your heart trophies to Christ’s feet. Give Him the pre-eminence in your lives. Crown Him Lord of all.

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

“Let every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

“Oh, that with yonder sacred throng,  
We at His feet may fall;  
We’ll join the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”

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